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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

"Liberals in Alberta: Studying the Lessons of History"

by

James Fischer

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Master of Arts

Department of Political Science

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Spring 1986

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Liberals in Alberta: Studying the Lessons of History" submitted by James Fischer in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date..... *18 November 1985*

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to
my parents, who have always
encouraged me to go one step
further.

Abstract

"Liberals in Alberta: Studying the Lessons of History" is an analysis of the Liberal Party in Alberta, both past and present. In particular, chapters 2 to 4 examine the history of the party in the province from 1905 to the 1980s, and chapters 5 to 9 examine the situation of Alberta's Liberals in 1985.

This thesis argues that the Liberal Party has not enjoyed political success in Alberta after 1921 because of two dominant factors: (1) in federal politics, the national Liberal Party, when in government, did nothing to appease Alberta demands, but perpetuated the metropolis-hinterland relationship between Eastern and Western Canada; (2) in provincial politics, the party was never able to present itself to Albertans as a party capable of detaching itself from the national Liberal Party, nor could it respond to the particular demands of Alberta's electorate.

This thesis also examines the current situation of Alberta's Liberals in the context of modern Alberta. This was done in order to assess what changes the Liberals must make if they are to alter the course they have followed this far in the province's history. Although the history of the party in the province is a dismal one, opportunities present themselves in the 1980s and, if any gains are to be made by the party, it will demand much work on the part of Liberals themselves to ensure the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

Acknowledgements.

I am indebted to my adviser, Dr. Fred Engelmann, for the guidance given throughout the course of this project and, in particular, during the final weeks when the pace became a bit hectic. Much appreciation is also extended to the other two members of my committee, Dr. Gurston Dacks and Dr. Ken Munro. A special word of thanks is in order for Dr. Gerard Grobben, who always managed to put the traumas brought on by the computer in proper perspective. Finally, I've appreciated the entertainment provided by my fellow inhabitants of the twelfth floor of the Tory Building. All errors or omissions in this thesis are, of course, my own.

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I. Introduction

Social scientists have often chosen to study the province of Quebec because of the unique political climate that has always existed there. It is a province whose governments have always been in the forefront of federal-provincial debate, albeit largely because of the unique composition of the province's population and the special desire to protect a language and culture by boosting provincial rights.

Alberta has come to be recognized as another province whose political behaviour is unlike the others, although this recognition has been a long time in the making. One factor which separates the province from the others is the decisive rejection of the Liberal Party that accompanied the election of 1921, and which has persisted to the present. This rejection has been entirely unique to the province, a phenomenon not shared by even the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan, which has shared much with Alberta in terms of early history. It is indeed a strange rejection, given that the Liberal Party brought the province into Confederation, formed the first provincial government and worked hard to entrench itself in the future of the province. Lewis Thomas's The Liberal Party in Alberta chronicles the demise of the party in 1921, but little has been done to explain why the party has never bounced back. David Smith has brought some insight into this with his The Regional Decline of a National Party: Liberals on the Prairies, but his focus

was on the fortunes of the federal wing of the party, although this in itself is significant. A study providing more provincial focus was the thesis presented by Gordon Anton in 1972, entitled "The Liberal Party in Alberta". Anton arrived at conclusions concerning the party which help greatly to understand the party's ill fortunes, and proposed recommendations for party organization which were implemented in 1975, and will be discussed at length later in this thesis. Because of the dismal showing of the Liberal Party in Alberta over the years, one may question why one would want to study the party at all. But that very dismal performance, and the uniqueness of it in the Canadian political experience, is in itself one very good reason for examining the party. There are other reasons.

The current state of politics in the province makes the Liberal Party worth watching. With the governing Progressive Conservatives having elected a new leader and Premier, the perennially popular Peter Lougheed will no longer be able to articulate the needs and desires of the province as he has done so successfully in the past fourteen years. There is no guarantee that Don Getty will be able to capture the imaginations of the voters as Lougheed did. In fact, there is no guarantee that the Progressive Conservative Party will continue to entice the electorate with plans to provide for the province's future. After fourteen years in office and no new direction in hand, the party may be perceived to be complacent and burned out. While NDP leader Ray Martin has

been a steady worker, it is uncertain that he can carry the party to bigger and better things his predecessor Grant Notley could have done given the right political circumstances. If the PCs are perceived as being far to the right, then there is room in the province for a centre or slightly right-wing party to make gains. While there is no lack of competitors who wish to take that spot, the Alberta Liberal Party may be in a position to do that more easily than other contenders. Such advances could not have been undertaken previously because of the presence of a federal Liberal government that was generally regarded as antagonistic to Alberta, but the provincial party is no longer plagued with this connection, nor with a national leader who seemingly personified this antagonism in the minds of many Western Canadians. Furthermore, many provincial Liberals have recognized the moment for what it is, and have moved towards overcoming the problems of the past and planning for the future. One need only look at the case of Ontario in the past year to see that gains can be made in a political situation that, only a year before, would have regarded a prediction of a Liberal victory as foolish. Ontario's Liberal Premier Peterson gained power following the resignation and replacement of Tory Premier Davis, first elected in 1971. Peterson's ascension also coincided with the departure of Pierre Trudeau from the federal scene. The circumstances of Ontario have many parallels to the Alberta scene.

With these circumstances in mind, this is an opportune time to study the errors of the past, evaluate the chances for success in the near future and determine systematically what is required on the part of the Liberal Party if it is to increase its chances for success.

This thesis, then, attempts an examination of the past performance of the Liberal Party in Alberta and its current state and then speculates on its immediate future. The examination will be conducted in two parts. First, the history of the Liberal Party in the province will be examined from 1905 to the present. This will be done by studying the fortunes of the party in four phases: the years in government; the years when the Liberals were the main opposition in Alberta politics; and the years in the wilderness when the province has been dominated by Peter Lougheed's Tories. Specifically, these chapters will argue that, historically, the party has been characterized by four main traits:

1. The party has been in a constant state of disorganization. There has been no consistent effort to maintain membership lists or full slates of officers at the provincial or, more importantly, the constituency levels. When elections have occurred, they have found the Liberal Party to be in no condition to contend for individual seats in the legislature or House of Commons, let alone for power. While there have been signs of recent rebuilding, there is much to be done before the

party can be recognized as a viable political force.

2. Liberals in Alberta have been plagued with perpetual infighting which has become deeply entrenched. The roots of these rifts are deep in history, dating back to before 1905, but the rifts widened during the party's years in provincial power. These old disputes have often been conducted in public, as have more recent ones which have been just as bitter, despite the Liberal tradition, held dear elsewhere, of keeping family feuds in the home, while presenting an image of solidarity and competence to the outside observer.
3. The provincial wing of the party has lacked leadership which could have provided motivation to members and political appeal to prospective supporters. Leaders, with some exceptions, have enjoyed relatively short tenure in office, being forced to leave before making any lasting impressions because of frustration with the infighting and bickering with the national wing of the party.
4. Liberals in Alberta have always lacked identity. This is partly due to the fact that other parties have always taken the initiative and grasped the moment from the party, leaving it with nothing better to offer, and hard-pressed to oppose the governing party. Identity with the federal wing of the party (and therefore the national government) always proved to be a hindrance, and thus cast Alberta Liberals into a classification of

their own.

The second part of the thesis is a critical examination of Alberta's Liberals in 1985, including both the Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta (LPCA) and the Alberta Liberal Party (ALP), with more emphasis on the latter. This second part will look at five main areas: party organization, finances, policy, membership and leadership. Each area will be discussed in a separate chapter, and observations noted. While each chapter will draw its own conclusions, these will be brought together in a concluding chapter. This final chapter will present an overview of the current state of the Liberal Party based on observations made and conclusions reached in the preceding chapters. Specifically, chapters 5 to 9 will argue that:

1. Party organization, for both the LPCA and the ALP, must take place at the grassroots level. While a single Liberal Party in Alberta is desirable, it must be one that is not a puppet of the larger national Liberal Party. Instead, it must be a strong organization, understanding of the needs of the province and willing to defend them.
2. Like organization, party financing must be pursued vigorously at the grassroots level. Party officers must move to take advantage of the laws governing political party finances, which encourage grassroots participation. Also, constituency associations must be granted greater control over their own money, but must

also assume responsibility for financing campaigns within their own ridings, leaving the provincial or federal party free to spend money on the provincial or nation-wide campaign. While room has been cleared in the provincial political arena for the party to identify itself, it still lacks concrete policies to present to prospective grassroots supporters. There remains little reason for non-members to take an interest in the party.

3. Policy must be developed that reflects both the needs and cleavages of the province. The approach currently being developed has potential, but runs the risk of becoming yet another closed process, where input from the party and public at large is required. The party should seek a platform in keeping with its middle-of-the-road orientation, while also remembering there are areas of the province requiring special attention. The South requires more emphasis on market stimulation, while the North requires more emphasis in the social services field. Apart from these, the party must address the needs of agriculture.
4. Young urban professionals appear to be attracted to the provincial party. This is desirable, in that it provides the ALP with a number of good candidates, but it is not enough to target this group alone. More effort must be made to recruit the young, the less educated and rural voters. The latter may have to wait before large amounts of energy can be directed to it, so that the party may

concentrate on key urban ridings in the North of the province where the opportunities may be more available for Liberals to make gains now.

5. Both wings of the party will have to address the question of leadership in 1986. The outcome of the leadership review confronting John Turner in the new year will not be determined in Alberta, but the LPCA should ensure its voice is heard in the discussion. If Turner is prepared to allow the construction of strong provincially oriented grassroots organizations at the expense of the regional boss system he was weaned on, then he may be an asset to Alberta's Liberals. In the provincial arena, the ALP must deal with the leadership question alone. ALP leader Nick Taylor will have little choice but to leave his position if his own showing in the provincial election is poor, whether other ALP candidates do well or not.
6. Above all, Alberta's Liberals must look at the history of their party and note past mistakes. They must also have an understanding of the province itself, both past and present. Such an understanding is necessary if past mistakes are not to be repeated.

The problems facing Alberta's Liberals, then, are many-faceted. To discover why the Liberal Party has done so poorly in Alberta could be the subject of much study. Those who have studied the situation emphasize some problem areas more than others. David Smith discounts the idea that it is

entirely a question of leadership, and chooses to focus on organization and policy.

Why Liberals (on the prairies) were displaced and continue to be deprived of support is more than a question of personalities no matter how luminous or grey the individuals in question. In this case party organization and policy, subjects which were often depreciated by party politicians in their evaluations of electoral success or defeat, deserve particular attention.¹

Smith zeroes in on economic policies to explain why the West became antagonistic towards the federal government and the national Liberal Party. Writing in 1981, Smith notes that the same issues today stand to be addressed by the central government and the party which has controlled it so much of the last fifty years, including tariffs, freight rates, wheat prices, questions of language and culture.² Because of its predominance, Smith identifies grain as being the single most important element contributing to the rift between the province and the Liberal Party.³

S.P. Regenstreif also notes the importance of organizational inadequacies on the part of Alberta Liberals, but places the blame again with the national wing of the party.⁴ He observes that the party is only alive during election time, a fact reinforced in the later writings of Reginald Whitaker and Joseph Wearing. Regenstreif explains

¹ David Smith, The Regional Decline of a National Party: Liberals on the Prairies. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p.xv.

² Ibid., p.7.

³ Ibid., p.23.

⁴ Samuel Peter Regenstreif, "The Liberal Party of Canada: A Political Analysis." (Ph.D dissertation, Cornell University, 1963), p.504.

how the party has been given direction by a number of regional bosses, a point expanded on elsewhere in this thesis. As long as federal power could be maintained, the need for a constituency based organization, especially in the political wasteland of Alberta, appeared minimal. While such organization may have been unnecessary for the continued fortunes of the national party, its absence did nothing to boost the prospects of the provincial party, a fact the latter gives considerable thought to.

Regenstreif's analysis of party pitfalls strikes deeper when he notes the shift that has occurred in the national-provincial relationship of the party.⁵ Prior to the 1960s, the preamble to most provincial Liberal constitutions had as one objective the organization of the Liberal Party in federal and provincial ridings and to promote the selection of candidates in both. The presence of an organization that could shift into a mode for fighting either type of election would have been a constantly well-oiled machine. This idea also recognizes the principle that a strong provincial base across the country makes for electoral successes nationally. Since two-thirds of the members in Alberta hold memberships in the Alberta Liberal Party as well as the Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta, the usefulness of separate organizations appears to be even more questionable.

⁵ Regenstreif, *op. cit.*, p.241.

Smith quotes former national Liberal Party General Secretary H.E. Kidd, who observes that "nothing shakes public confidence in a political party more than evidence of internal dissension, bickering and bad feeling."⁶ But such dissension has been the norm in the provincial party since before 1905. The problem is no closer to resolution in the modern era. In fact, the visibility of internal disputes and factionalism has increased.

While both historical and current problems have traditionally been blamed to a large extent on the insensitivities of the eastern establishment as manifested in the governing national Liberal Party, the case has been overstated. Many of these problems confronting Liberals in Alberta are self-induced and will therefore have to be solved by Alberta Liberals alone. This effort will demand Liberals coming to terms with themselves and with the realities of the modern Alberta in which they hope to compete for power. The latter demand can only be dealt with after considerable energy has been devoted to the first, that of getting the party in shape--not an easy task for a party whose entire history has been one of disorganization and disharmony. Liberals themselves will decide largely whether they are to make gains federally or provincially in Alberta where the political climate seems to be changing, and where opportunity presents itself for the party that can grasp the moment.

⁶ Smith, op.cit., p.166.

II. The Years of Government: 1905-21

In his 1972 thesis about the Alberta Liberal Party, Gordon Anton noted that the only study of Alberta Liberalism to date was Lewis Thomas's The Liberal Party in Alberta. Anton's concern was with the party in provincial politics and he drew heavily from Thomas's text to provide historical background. Because Thomas's work dealt only with the years of the party's successes as a provincial government, concluding with its decisive defeat in 1921, Anton filled in the next fifty years by cataloguing the numerous perils experienced by successive provincial leaders. In describing the troubles faced by Alberta's federal Liberals after 1921, there are many more sources to draw from. But when it comes to analyzing the party before 1921, Thomas's book is still the undisputed prime source. Indeed, his chronicle of the Liberals in the province's first sixteen years of Confederation is best described as a study of federal Liberalism. It must be remembered that when the Liberal government was first implanted in the new province its neophyte leaders were by no means neophyte politicians, but had made themselves known representing territorial interests in Ottawa. In this, their roles had been federally oriented. Their method of selection and their subsequent returns to power by the electorate are more easily understood within the realm of federal than provincial politics. When the province finally came of age (which had not occurred with

its birth in 1905) it correspondingly became aware of its own interests and needs. It is not surprising that, at the same instant, it shook off the vestments of its youth in the guise of the Liberal Party and pursued an independent course. As Thomas's book leads one to believe, the collapse of the Liberals in 1921 was a delayed reaction. Had they not been implanted by the federal government in 1905, their chances of governing the province would have been only marginally better than those of any other political group, and they most certainly would not have lasted as long as they did, nor basked in the comfortable majorities they won. When the provincial electorate finally discarded the party, it was after they had been educated by the railroad scandal and the constant show of factionalism within the provincial government and party. It was inevitable that Alberta would reject the old-line party for a grassroots movement with a particular appeal to a people normally preferring non-partisan politics. Three factors stand out in the province's history to explain the Liberal demise before the first quarter of the century had passed:

1. Partisan politics has never been a part of the fabric of Alberta before 1905 and could not compete with other non-partisan forces which reared themselves later and easily displaced the party.
2. There was a lack of cohesion between the fledgling provincial Liberal Party organization and the mammoth national organization that was also the federal

government. Until 1911, conflict between the two wings was evident in Alberta's early years and has constantly plagued the party to the present.

3. Finally, but by no means least important, the governing federal Liberal Party failed to give due regard to the province's needs or pay heed to policy demands of the region.

There may have been Liberals in Alberta prior to 1905, but there was no provincial Liberal Party.⁷ Calls for a non-partisan approach to politics in Alberta were made, even by some prominent Liberals who were guaranteed powerful positions in the new provinces. Territorial Premier F.W.G. Haultain was one such advocate. Apart from his desire for non-partisan politics he advocated a transfer of responsibility for natural resources to the new jurisdictions.⁸ Thus, it was no oversight on the part of Prime Minister Laurier that Haultain was discouraged from seeking office after 1905 and was rewarded with a position in the Saskatchewan Supreme Court. Laurier's strategy was blatantly partisan. Ottawa appointed Liberal lieutenant-governors who appointed Liberal premiers.⁹ Laurier promoted Peter Talbot's candidacy as Premier but Talbot preferred A.C. Rutherford for that office, and the

⁷ Lewis G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta: A History of Politics in the Province of Alberta 1905-1921. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p.3.

⁸ Ibid., p.20.

⁹ C.B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), p.24.

Prime Minister bowed to his friend's wishes.¹⁰ Having appointed Liberal G.H.V. Bulyea as Lieutenant-Governor, Laurier was protecting his interests. By keeping natural resources out of the clutches of the new but weak province, and by establishing a sympathetic provincial government, Laurier assured himself of Liberal support from what otherwise might have been a source of opposition. He escaped having to deal with a province whose interests, if defended by a truly representative group capable of challenging the Ottawa government, could wreak havoc with eastern provinces which had enjoyed exploiting the territories before 1905, and wished for no new arrangements. The metropolis-hinterland relationship survived, and so did Laurier for the time being. His successors would not be so lucky in their dealings with an older and wiser Alberta.

Rutherford's cabinet was made up of men who had already made names for themselves in the party. Although small, the cabinet was representative of the cleavages that existed even then in Alberta. C.W. Cross, renowned in Edmonton Liberal circles, was Attorney-General, while W.H. Cushing of Calgary was Minister of Public Works.¹¹

Although planted in Alberta by a federal government with selfish motives, the Liberals would likely have won the first provincial election on November 9, 1905 without this assistance. In their campaign they skilfully employed the western dislike for eastern corporate interests that had

¹⁰ Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.18.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.21.

already firmly entrenched itself in the western mind. Parallels were drawn between the provincial Conservatives and the CPR which had pushed through the southern half of the province.¹² Simultaneously, the Liberals were introducing the Grand Trunk Pacific into the northern part of the province. In that half of Alberta the Liberals were already enjoying comfortable support thanks to a concentration of Roman Catholics, many of French-Canadian ancestry who brought their political leanings with them from Quebec.¹³ Communities such as St. Paul, St. Albert, Legal, Morinville and Bon Accord resembled French-Canadian parish towns as reflected in family names of residents and the town layout that ensured a Catholic church dominated the centre of the town. Alberta, like the other western provinces, had been the recipient of many immigrants from the United Kingdom, the United States and Eastern Europe, thanks to the immigration policies of the day as implemented by Laurier's Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton.¹⁴ From 1901 to 1911, Alberta's population leaped more than five times from 73,022 to 374,292.¹⁵ The newcomers were more than content in their relatively prosperous new surroundings. It was natural for them to bestow their political blessing on the federal party responsible for their newfound security. Other motives of self interest may have influenced the provincial

¹² *ibid.*, p.26.

¹³ *ibid.*, p.28.

¹⁴ Regenstreif, *op.cit.*, p.70.

¹⁵ Carlo Caldarola (ed.), Society and Politics in Alberta: Research Papers. (Toronto, Methuen Publications, 1979), p.385.

population. Deferred voting in federal elections allowed Albertans in an era of Liberal strength to know which party would form the government and vote accordingly.

Given these factors concerning the indigenous and immigrant populations, it is likely that the Liberals would have been victorious in 1905, but possibly with a poorer showing than twenty-three of the twenty-five seats they captured in the legislature.¹⁶ Thomas credits the overwhelming success to the fact that the party held both federal and provincial power.¹⁷ The great benefits to be reaped from this advantage were not missed by Laurier or Rutherford. The edge that entrenched power offered was a critical one when used effectively, to ensure there was organized party activity at the local level, and sufficient finances and campaign literature to bring about electoral success.¹⁸ As later elections would show, when the Liberal Party was out of power federally, the provincial party could not muster the grassroots support necessary to propel its politicians to victory. Without this continued propping up by the federal wing, the Liberal regime eventually gave way to the inevitable. In the end it succumbed to a highly organized entity that truly reflected the prairie lifestyle and economics. But, in 1905, this support from Ottawa was

¹⁶ Initially, the Liberals claimed twenty-one seats, but ended up with twenty-three and 65 percent of the popular vote. See Thomas, op.cit., p.28 and Roger Gibbins, Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline. (Scarborough: Butterworth and Company, Canada, Ltd., 1980), p.133.

¹⁷ Thomas, op.cit., p.29.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.30.

not only of assistance, it was the linchpin of the Liberal strategy.

Following the election, Rutherford's Liberal government made important decisions that promoted dissent not only from Albertans, but within Liberal ranks and from within the Cabinet. If one looks at the example established south of the border, American states entering the Union had usually been careful to appease all elements in the newly created jurisdiction by dispersing the various services that came with statehood. If one city was chosen as the capital, a competitor was sure to receive the state university. Others would receive prisons and other works which guaranteed jobs in construction and further employment opportunities afterwards. Such was not the case in Alberta. In choosing the site of the provincial capital, cabinet members from Edmonton defended claims for their city as adamantly as their counterparts from Calgary defended theirs. Leading the case for Edmonton was the Attorney-General, C.W. Cross, who argued for Edmonton by accusing Calgary of being too much the product of the CPR and its spokesman, the Conservative Party.¹⁹ Edmonton was to be the new centre of the railroad in Alberta. Minister of Public Works W.H. Cushing argued carefully and logically for Calgary, drawing attention to its merits as a business centre. But, in the end, Cross and others from the North won out. Their argument that Edmonton was the centre of the population, the railroad,

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.38.

transportation, geography and farming was accompanied by the observation that Calgary was too close to the American border.²⁰ When the decision was made, Edmonton won by sixteen votes to eight. Those opposed were all from southern constituencies. The battle over the provincial capital demonstrated three realities about the Liberals in Alberta. First, it showed who wielded power in the cabinet, putting Cross at the forefront and confirming his position as the most powerful Liberal apart from the Premier himself. Secondly, it became evident that the Liberals most closely connected to the federal party were dispensing patronage favours for those who had already demonstrated their support, at the expense of enticing voters away from the opposition in weaker areas. Finally, the factionalism that existed within the cabinet cannot be ignored. While these disputes might be lessened in significance by shrugging off the capital city question as a single incident, their importance comes to light when other incidents are seen to compound the damage of this initial decision that might otherwise have been forgotten.

If Edmonton became the capital, it might be assumed that Calgary would receive the provincial university as a suitable consolation prize. It was not to be. The flames of internal party strife and southern electorate misgivings were fanned by the 1907 decision to locate the university in the Premier's own riding of Strathcona, across the river

²⁰ *ibid.*

from Edmonton itself.²¹ Blatant opposition was skirted by the timely prorogation of the legislature before the announcement.²² The snub to Calgary was apparent and, notably, unnecessary. The immediate result was for Calgary to forge ahead with plans for her own university. The long term result was the creation of a lasting resentment within party ranks at all levels. While the practice of rewarding local stalwarts in Edmonton was served, the university decision, when juxtaposed with the capital city decision, did little to further political fortunes in the province and much to dampen them.

The Liberals moved in other directions to strengthen their grip on the province. The newly established provincial Supreme Court became as much a holding tank for senior Liberals as it did a retiring pasture.²³ The first Chief Justice, A.L. Sifton, moved out of the supposed non-partisan role in later years and into the Premier's chair.

Other improvisations undertaken by the Liberals appeared to be done more in the interests of providing good government than of partisan entrenchment. Cushing moved quickly to take over the private telephone services which, in the spirit of profit maximization, provided services to urban areas but were reluctant to extend into the rural areas.²⁴ By the end of 1907, Cushing's takeover had led to an increase of four times as much telephone line in the

²¹ *ibid.*, p.50.

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.53.

province than there had been before. With it went an increase in the budget worth \$1,380,050.²⁵ Ironically, this commendable extension of services would plague the province as a financial loser.²⁶ Since the province had still been debt free a year earlier,²⁷ the change would be noticeable and attributable to the policies of the provincial government in the years to come.

The Liberal Party was able to govern relatively unhindered due to the strength of its majority and the lukewarm nature of the opposition. The Conservatives were ineffective in the role of opposition. One of their two members often sided with the government and later left the party altogether, to be defeated by a Liberal in the next election.²⁸ In 1905 the Conservatives had entered the election without a leader, enhancing the Liberals' fortunes. Opposition did come from the lone socialist in the legislature, who represented Rocky Mountain and its coal mining economy.²⁹ Labour demands in the coal industry were persistent, but received little from the new government other than an eight-hour law. It is not surprising that such a constituency would send a socialist to a legislature composed almost exclusively of Liberals. But it is equally unsurprising that labour concerns would not top the list of priorities of the new government. The Liberals understood

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.53.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.43.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.67-68.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.69.

their situation in the province enough to know that, as an old-line party, their hold on the province was subject to review if they did not work to entrench themselves in the minds of the predominant rural class, following their privileged installation at the hands of Laurier's government in 1905. Coal mines and labour disputes could be set aside. The main issues the government decided to face were entrenching itself by doling out the patronage packages associated with established provincehood, and providing extended services to rural communities in the guise of telephones and railways. It was the pursuit of the latter that, more than anything, exposed the rifts that existed in the party and set it on a course that would eventually expose it for what it was--a federally placed government that thrived on the privileges it and its federal parent could provide, and which by nature was not prepared to meet the long-term interests of the province.

The main thorn in the side of Alberta's Liberals was the scandal over the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway. It was not a scandal in the sense that corruption was apparent, but because it showed the government was guilty of mismanagement.

Questions concerning the sale of bonds for railroad construction had been directed at the Premier by one of his own members, J.R. Boyle of Sturgeon. He asserted that the government had been too hasty in its negotiations with the A. & G.W. and was spending much more than required for its

construction. Beyond accusations, he proposed a resolution that would expropriate the rights of the railroad, leaving the work of building to be done by some other means.³⁰ Because of the nature of the original agreement, this would lead to a motion of want of confidence. The government was under attack for its methods, being made to look careless in the spending of provincial money, and the attack was coming from within the Liberal ranks.

To make matters worse, Boyle quickly added cover-up to his accusations of incompetence. He asserted that Deputy Attorney-General S.W. Woods had removed some papers that may have had a bearing on his own claims of bad business dealings, a charge repudiated by Attorney-General Cross, who said the government had nothing to hide.³¹

To add to the consternation, Cushing resigned as Minister of Public Works, disagreeing with the government's guaranteeing of railroad bonds in general, and those of the A. & G.W. in particular.³²

The fact that the A. & G.W. was meant to service the North added to the north-south rift within the party and was expressed openly in debate in the legislature.³³ Questions were raised about the company and its reliability. This provided the focus of the attack directed at the government. If the stability and reliability of the company were questionable, then the government must be incompetent for

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.72.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*, p.71.

³³ *ibid.*, p.77.

getting involved with it. Division within the party was most apparent when, in a legislature where it boasted thirty-eight of the forty-one members, it survived the vote on the issue by a majority of only eight. When it was rumoured that Cushing, the dissenting cabinet minister, was asked to rejoin the cabinet, Attorney-General Cross resigned.³⁴ The ever present contention between north and south was making itself evident, even within the cabinet. With rumours that more cabinet ministers were about to resign, Rutherford gave in to the inevitable and stepped down as Premier.

The importance of the north-south rift in the party, combined with the railroad scandal, was noted by John Richards and Larry Pratt in their insightful analysis of the growth of the province:

The North held a special place in the affections of the Alberta Liberals, a party which addressed the aspirations, not of the ranching-CPR elite of the South, but of Clifford Sifton's "men in sheepskin coats"--the new settlers and immigrants of Edmonton, the growing towns along the railways, the farms of the northern parkland, the newly arrived merchants and business men of the province. Successive Liberal administrations gave high priority to settlement and exploitation of the north of the province and, to that end, unwisely guaranteed the bonds of proposed northern railroads into the Peace River farming district and the mineral-rich Athabasca area. The agreement to guarantee bonds of the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway (with northern terminal adjacent to Fort McMurray) precipitated in 1909 and 1910 Alberta's worst political scandal. Controversy over the terms of the agreement became sufficiently intense, within the ruling Liberal party as well as the opposition, that Premier Rutherford was forced to resign. The Liberals survived in office, however, until 1921 by which time all these northern

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.82.

railroads had become bankrupt and were reorganized--either under direct provincial government ownership and management, or with running rights granted to the CPR.³⁵

The search for a new leader and Premier was also characterized by the cleavages in the party. Laurier's old friend, Talbot, was mentioned, but he was unacceptable to the caucus. Instead, the caucus favoured the man whose principles had set him aside from the embarrassing scandal, none other than Cushing. He, however, was unacceptable to the upper echelons.³⁶ The third and acceptable option was A.L. Sifton, Chief Justice of the province.

Sifton had a chance to break out of the highly partisan mould Rutherford's regime had been cast in. As Chief Justice, he had been out of active politics. In his cabinet selection he included no former cabinet members nor any MLAs who had been supportive of the A. & G.W. contract.³⁷ These precautions may have worked well for the new Premier in aligning him more closely with the non-partisan tradition held dear by Albertans prior to 1905. Whether or not he had this in mind at the time, other forces kept such a realignment from becoming a reality. The continued antagonism of party strife and the effectiveness that it fostered in the government meant Sifton was to fight a losing battle after 1910 against the more natural non-partisan forces in Alberta politics. According to

³⁵ John Richards and Larry Pratt, Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1979), p.18.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.91.

³⁷ *ibid.*

Thomas:

Indeed, "the Waterways incident" was the pivotal fact in Alberta politics; itself the product of peculiarly western and Albertan forces, it so shook both the party organization and the party conscience of the province that political behaviour was to diverge even further from the conventional path. Before 1910 there were occasional signs of agrarian and frontier eccentricity in Alberta, but for the first five years there was little deviation from the norm for provincial politics in Canada. After 1910 there was a steady movement away from that norm until, in 1921, Alberta broke completely from her allegiance to the older national parties.³⁸

In the byelections of June 29, 1910, both Sifton and C.R. Mitchell were elected comfortably. Displaying both a cautious gauging of electorate sympathies and an appreciation for provincial cleavages, Sifton sought a northern seat, although he himself had been tied more closely to the South.³⁹ In what may have been ominous foreshadowing for the party in the wake of their early railroad disasters, the third seat contested in the June byelections went to a candidate of the Farmers Association.⁴⁰

Try as he might, Sifton could not stop infighting among those in his party. They made the party into a battleground, showing it to be tied closely to the federal party, an association which would work against party fortunes in the province.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.95.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.94.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* The Farmers candidate was Robert Patterson, who labelled himself an Independent Conservative for his byelection victory in Macleod.

Initially, the feud was based on personalities more than on problems of organization. As Thomas notes:

The Conservative papers had long hinted, with increasing openness, that the split in the ranks of Alberta Liberalism was the outward and visible sign of a subterranean struggle for control of the party between Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior in Laurier's government, and the provincial Attorney-General, C.W. Cross. Oliver had for years been the leading figure in Alberta Liberalism; as owner of the most important Liberal paper [Edmonton Bulletin] in the province, and one of the most influential in the West, as federal member for Edmonton, and as chief western representative in the Laurier cabinet, he was a formidable opponent.⁴¹

Each faction had its own strong following and, through newspaper control or support, a voice that ensured publicity. The lid could not be kept on internal disputes. Indeed, the party's problems seemed to gain more attention than the disputes over railroads, but the two remained intertwined. An antagonistic article appeared in the Edmonton Bulletin in November of 1910:

The article in question consisted of a violent attack on Oliver and the Bulletin and an eulogy of Cross. Oliver, it said, "dreads and dislikes Hon. C.W. Cross for obvious reasons." Evidently, the "reason" to which the paper referred, was the danger to Oliver's control of the Alberta Liberal party, threatened by the able and youthful Cross, whose personal qualities were such that they won him many devoted friends. No one in Alberta public life has had more loyal followers. The change in premiers and the apparent acceptance of Sifton by the province in the bye-elections [sic] seemed to have weakened the former Attorney-General but, as events were to prove, he could still count on a following in the legislature. While such a group continued to exist, the Liberal party in the province would be greatly weakened; it was fortunate for the Sifton government that a general election could, if necessary, be postponed until 1914. The most important problem before the Premier was to heal the breach in his

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.91.

party.

The cleavage had occurred over railway policy; therein the greatest danger to Liberal unity existed.⁴²

Sifton introduced his own railroad policy. Its chief plank of dismantling the existing A. & G.W. was opposed from within the Liberal ranks by Cross and others who favoured, primarily, the benefits Northern Alberta would have reaped from its construction.⁴³ They referred to the resources that could be opened for development by pushing through with the A. & G.W. The topic of control over natural resources became a bone of contention itself when backbench Liberals made a point of forcing the Premier to address the issue. One such maverick, A. Bramley-Moore of Lloydminster, talked of "provincial nationality," stating very explicitly that if control over resources was not transferred to the province, independence might be a more reasonable guide by which to plot the course of Alberta's future.⁴⁴ Sifton's response was a non-committal assurance that the situation was being examined. However, it became apparent that his government was still tied closely to the national party's conception of Canada. Those who opposed Sifton, including those in his own ranks, were arguing for a truly provincial approach to policy. The inability to resist the centripetal forces of Ottawa were manifested in the provincial government and opposition to it was growing.⁴⁵

⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 108-9

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 116.

In the 1911 federal election Laurier fought for reciprocity, a policy that would endear him in the hearts of farmers, and to western farmers in particular. Despite his loss to the Conservatives, Alberta elected six Liberals and only one MP to the government benches. Four of the six Liberals were new. The returning MPs, both farmers, had increased their margins. Threatened manufacturing interests in Eastern Canada had rejected Laurier's reciprocity thesis as too dangerous. The metropolis-hinterland pattern of Canadian economics had been maintained. Alberta's opposition was obvious by the support given Laurier's Liberals. An inability to alter the traditional economic relationship with the rest of Canada through support of one of the two dominant parties would eventually lead the province to reject the Liberals. They would be regarded as a party impotent to effect change for the betterment of Alberta. As table 1 demonstrates, this antagonistic voting pattern established early in Alberta's life would persist.

Table 1

- PERCENTAGE OF ALBERTA POPULAR VOTE SHARED BY POLITICAL
PARTIES IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS 1908-1984

Election Year	Liberals Popular Vote	Conservatives Popular Vote	Total Vote For Both	Election Winners	Alberta Government
1908	50.2	44.4	94.6	Libs	Libs
1911	53.3	42.5	95.8	Cons	Libs
1917	35.5	61.0	96.5	Union	Libs
1921	15.8	20.3	36.1	Libs	UFA
1925	25.9	31.8	57.7	Libs	UFA
1926	24.5	31.5	56.0	Libs	UFA
1930	30.0	33.9	63.9	Cons	UFA
1935	21.2	16.9	38.1	Libs	Socred
1940	37.9	13.0	50.9	Libs	Socred
1945	21.8	18.7	40.5	Libs	Socred
1949	34.5	16.8	51.3	Libs	Socred
1953	35.0	14.5	49.5	Libs	Socred
1957	27.9	27.6	55.5	Cons	Socred
1958	13.7	59.9	73.6	Cons	Socred
1962	19.4	42.8	62.2	Cons	Socred
1963	22.1	45.3	67.4	Libs	Socred
1965	22.4	46.6	69.0	Libs	Socred
1968	35.7	50.4	86.1	Libs	Socred
1972	25.0	57.6	82.6	Libs	Cons
1974	24.8	61.2	86.0	Libs	Cons
1979	22.1	65.6	87.7	Cons	Cons
1980	22.2	64.9	87.1	Libs	Cons
1984	13.0	69.0	82.0	Cons	Cons

SOURCE: adapted in part from Richard Simeon and David Elkins, Small
Worlds: Provinces and Parties in Canadian Political Life,
(Toronto: Methuen, 1980.), pp. 146-7.

Sifton managed to quiet the dissent within his own ranks by 1912, when the legislature passed an altered railroad bill. The new bill offered greatly expanded railroad services but was more amicable to the various factions within the province and, correspondingly, within the Liberal Party. Only the Conservatives voted against the bill.⁴⁶ It was a pleasant departure from the regular course of events in Rutherford's days. The healing process appeared to be complete with the re-introduction of Cross as Attorney-General, and the introduction of Boyle as Minister of Education, among other new cabinet appointments.

Railway problems continued to hassle the government. The 1910 decision to expropriate the bond money of the A.& G.W. had been challenged. In the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Alberta had acted beyond her powers in doing so. In the opinion of the JCPC:

The effect of the statute of 1910, if validly enacted, would have been to preclude the bank from fulfilling its legal obligations to return their money to the bondholders whose right to this return was a civil right which had arisen and remained enforceable outside the Province. The Statute was on this ground beyond the powers of the Legislature of Alberta, inasmuch as what was sought to be enacted was neither confined to property and civil rights within the Province, nor directed to matters merely of a local or private nature within it. Their Lordships will advise His Majesty that the appeal should be allowed, and the action dismissed. The Respondents [the Government] must pay the costs here and in the courts below.⁴⁷

The decision added fuel to the fire already burning in the young province. Not only did the decision underscore the

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.125.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.128.

inability of the province to govern its own affairs in the vital area of intraprovincial railroads, it also protected the interests of the eastern banks at the cost of provincial autonomy. At the same time, it made the province face an economic crisis when it had previously enjoyed freedom from such a crisis.⁴⁸ Dislike for banks would find increased support in Alberta as the years went on and would work against the Liberals in future elections, both provincial and federal.

It was in the aftermath of this confrontation that Sifton first went to the polls in 1913. The problems resulting from the Privy Council decision worked somewhat to his advantage in this instance. The Liberals were able to draw the connection between the Conservative Party and eastern banks vis-a-vis the CPR, thus detracting from the perennial Conservative claim to be the party espousing provincial rights.⁴⁹ But if it worked against the Conservatives by exposing their connections, it also made for an awareness that the provincial Liberals were helpless to change the situation. The party was returned, but with a less impressive majority than in the past, with thirty-seven seats to the Conservatives' seventeen, and enjoying just less than 50 percent of the popular vote.⁵⁰ Sifton and Cross were returned, but each ran in two constituencies, a practice which, although seemingly peculiar today, was a

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.138.

⁵⁰ A number of independent candidates also ran, but were unsuccessful.

frequent occurrence. It worked in Sifton's case, as he was defeated in his old haunt of Macleod, but won in the North. Rutherford was defeated, as were a number of anti-Sifton Liberals. The Conservatives might have seized the opportunity to usurp the Liberals during the tumultuous years after 1910, but they failed to do so for two reasons. First, they lacked an adequate organization or suitable platform.⁵¹ Secondly, they were an old-line party which the province did not look to as a suitable representative of the province's interests. The Liberals possessed some measure of organization and the great bonus of being able to dispense both federal (until 1911) and provincial patronage. Had another highly organized political body existed in the provincial election year of 1913 that could claim to speak for the province without the centralist albatross the Liberals were burdened with, the election results could easily have been tragic for the Liberals. The seeds for such an upset had been planted and were germinating, their year of fruition to be 1921.

Railways continued to be a preoccupation after the days of Sifton, when Charles Stewart had become Premier. The new province would have to deal with the railroad burden continuously, just as Sir John A. Macdonald had had to wrestle with it in the early years of Confederation. Like the railroad deals struck across Canada from 1864-1873 that alternately brought fame or shame on Macdonald, so the A.&

⁵¹ Thomas, op.cit., p.146.

G.W. dealings brought disgrace to the Alberta Liberals. In the latter case, the commitment to expand the railroad, coupled with the rapid extension of telephone services as previously mentioned, led the province from debt-free prosperity to the edge of financial disaster. As Richards and Pratt note:

State expansion of railroad track and low-cost telephone service helped to break down the isolation of farms and remote towns, stimulated the expansion of business activities and agricultural development in a country of immense distances and short growing seasons, and, by facilitating effective organization and communication, played a role in the growth of the co-operative movement in the West. But these gains were expensive and the province was soon badly in debt. By 1913 Alberta's debt was \$33.7 million, while Saskatchewan's stood at \$21.3 million; between 1913 and 1921 Alberta's debt grew by \$62 million, but Saskatchewan's increased by only half as much.⁵²

The discrepancies between the growth of debt in Alberta and that of Saskatchewan helps determine why the latter province was not as adamant about rejecting a Liberal government as soon as Alberta was.

Other issues had to be dealt with by the Liberals. Although they may not have had a direct relationship to the party's demise of 1921, they do help explain the nature of Alberta, and help explain further why the Liberals could not continue to be the governors of the province.

The increasing resentment against things eastern was not only directed at banks, federal governments and old-line parties. Old-line established churches suffered as well. Their interests were too closely connected with the

⁵² Richards and Pratt, op.cit., p.18.

privileged classes of the East. As disenchantment with the East increased, it is not surprising to find an increase in adherence to non-orthodox religious sects. In 1908, among eighteen Liberal MLAs whose religious affiliation could be found, there were ten Presbyterians, four Methodists, one Roman Catholic, one Anglican, one Baptist and one Mormon.⁵³ Among thirty-eight UFA members in 1921, there were nine declared Presbyterians, a proportionate number to the Liberals' five in 1908. Among the fifteen Liberals elected in 1921 there were three declared Catholics, two Baptists and only one Methodist compared to the seven among UFA members. The majority of Liberal were Protestants, most claiming membership in one of the older established denominations. But the most interesting observation is the large number of UFA members declaring themselves as Protestants without noting a denomination. One assumption is that these members adhered to a Protestant sect, and were not members of an orthodox, established church. There was only one declared Catholic among UFA members, and many claimed membership in a Masonic Lodge.

The implications of this support from the sects was serious for the provincial government. The churches supported the case for prohibition, but the most adamant support came from those churches with a more populist, fundamental basis.⁵⁴ Because of the fervour created for the

⁵³ This, and later information about MLAs, MPs and some election results are compiled from the Canadian Parliamentary Guide.

⁵⁴ Thomas, op.cit., p.162.

cause, the Liberals passed a Prohibition Act in 1916 that allowed little room for debate. It was done much sooner and easier than many jurisdictions managed to do it, an indication that the party realized the power generating and accumulating behind the fundamentalist movement.

The women's movement was another potential thorn in the Liberal side, but actually ended up serving the party well. In a mood not unlike that of the voters of 1905, leaders among the newly enfranchised women became vocal allies of the party in the 1917 provincial election to, as they said, "do something for the people who have given us the vote."⁵⁵ While there was general discontent with the East, the final act that would lead the province to oust the old-line parties once and for all had not yet happened.

Conscription was a federal issue, but its implications necessarily affected the discourse in provincial legislatures as well. Sifton planned the June 1917 provincial election before the federal one, where the issue would most definitely cause rifts in the party. The Liberals squeaked through the provincial election with thirty-four MLAs elected to the Conservatives' nineteen and three independents. The war years had brought a measure of prosperity and the conscription crisis had not yet erupted. When it did, in the midst of the federal election, it tore apart both the country and the Liberal Party. Laurier, opposed to conscription, lost many Liberals to Borden's

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.165.

Unionist government, which was duly elected. In Alberta, Sifton had left provincial politics and been elected as a Liberal Unionist MP. Many in the province supported Oliver and his conscriptionist stance.⁵⁶ The whole issue made for strange bedfellows, with C.W. Cross joining the conscriptionist camp of Oliver, in opposition to Laurier. Only one MP from Alberta declared himself a Laurier Liberal.

Liberal support in the province was no longer solid, mainly because the federal Liberal Party was far from being a unified force, with Laurier sitting in opposition while Liberal Unionists helped Borden govern. The new government did much to help upset the West, despite the presence of Sifton and old Liberal Alberta MPs W.A. Buchanan and M. Clark on the government side of the House of Commons. The War Times Elections Act, introduced after the election, enfranchised widows, wives, daughters, mothers and sisters of overseas servicemen. It also disenfranchised any post-1902 naturalized Canadians whose country of origin was an enemy country.⁵⁷ The blow to Alberta was devastating. A province since 1905, its population had increased five-fold between 1901 and 1911, the result of Liberal immigration policies. Disenfranchisement was a sad turn of events for the new Canadians concerned, who had previously put much hope into their new homeland and showed their appreciation at the polls. The presence of a former Premier and other

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.171.

⁵⁷ D. Owen Carrigan, Canadian Party Platforms 1867-1968. (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1968), p.68.

provincial Liberals among the Unionist ranks could not have gone over well with the electorate. All three western Premiers, who were also all Liberals, supported the Union government.⁵⁸

The aftermath of the 1917 federal election saw the Liberal Party in Alberta disintegrate. It had always been held together by its patronage advantage which was well exercised. But the national party, the parent of the fledgling provincial party, had been out of office since 1911 and was now torn apart. Sifton had held together a deeply and perpetually divided party by ruling with an iron hand.⁵⁹ But he was now gone, sitting as a cabinet minister in a government that was largely Conservative and had just passed the War Times Elections Act. The time was right for a political group to fill that inevitable gulf that Liberal Party disarray had left. Premier Stewart was not able to mend the tears in his party's fabric. He did not have the command over cabinet or party members that Sifton had maintained.⁶⁰ He added to his problems by attempting to appear conciliatory but he only angered the Alberta population more, driving into their minds that the old-line party was no longer capable of governing on their behalf. At the conference of Premiers he did not pursue the paramount question of natural resources.⁶¹ He recommended a Liberal Unionist for a Senate appointment in the person of W.J.

⁵⁸ Regenstreif, op.cit., p.75.

⁵⁹ Thomas, op.cit., p.183.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *ibid.*

Harmer, the Deputy Minister of Telephones. In a confrontation with Cross in which the latter was given a specified period of time to resign, Stewart was defied.⁶² Stewart's fate was sealed in 1920 when there was a sudden drop in agricultural prices.⁶³

More hope in the federal party disappeared when Mackenzie King was named leader at the 1919 convention.⁶⁴ King's chief opponent was W.S. Fielding, who had introduced the Reciprocity Bill in 1911, having served as Laurier's Finance Minister. Also, the convention failed to condemn protection as a principle of party policy. The farmers were forced to turn away and form the National Progressive Party.

Apart from the traditional provincial disenchantment with the Conservatives, that party too was in disarray. The United Farmers of Alberta were not. That organization was such a force to be reckoned with that Stewart tread lightly near them, courting their support in 1921. He did not go so far, however, as to bring farmers into the cabinet.⁶⁵ The UFA had a role much like that of a third party in a minority government situation, as Stewart's policy constantly reflected UFA demands.⁶⁶ The end of Liberal government was long overdue and it was only a matter of time before they vacated office.

⁶² *ibid.*, p.187.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p.185.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Regenstreif, *op.cit.*, p.76.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

To understand why the Liberals fell from favour in the provincial arena, one should look not only at programs of the provincial party but also at a growing awareness among westerners that they were being exploited by the East, and the resultant desire to do something about it. As C.B. Macpherson noted in his analysis of Alberta politics, reaction was not immediate.⁶⁷ Following the defeat of the low tariff policy of 1911, alienation grew among western farmers.⁶⁸ A lack of representation in cabinet decision making led to a sense of helplessness. The Liberals were perceived as a powerless provincial government when put up against the might of the central government. The latter had the backing of a larger electorate and also served the interests of the economic elite. Other factors helped convince Albertans to reject the party. Party structure was one such factor.

Provincial parties were not separate organizational entities, but wings of the national organization. Parties defended such a structuring on the merits of its contribution to efficiency. A single machine that could be cranked into operation for both provincial and national contests would be a well oiled one, keeping the loyalties and interests of its members high.⁶⁹ Unfortunately for the provincial Liberals in 1921, such a system also had its problems. Disclosure of campaign fund sources at the

⁶⁷ Macpherson, op.cit., p.25.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.24.

national level showed the party receiving financial support from large commercial and corporate interests, like its Conservative counterpart. The amounts made westerners question the ability of the party to continue to support their interests, a particularly damaging bit of evidence at a time when eastern economic exploitation was a dominant theme.⁷⁰ The result was the rejection of both parties. For the provincial Liberals, given the nature of party organization, the connection helped determine their demise.

The results of 1921 were to be expected. Stewart's Liberals ran fifty-nine candidates but won only fifteen seats, claiming almost 34 percent of the popular vote.⁷¹ The UFA ran forty-five candidates, but elected thirty-eight, even though they claimed a smaller percentage of the popular vote. Only one Conservative from among thirteen candidates was elected, as were four Labour MLAs. C.W. Cross and J.R. Boyle miraculously survived, the only remaining members of the 1905 legislature.⁷²

Later in the year, the rejection of the Liberals became permanent. In the federal election that matched Mackenzie King against Arthur Meighen, no Liberals or Conservatives were elected from the province. Alberta returned Progressives, Labour and two independents. Not surprisingly, many UFA members were to be found among the Progressive

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p.41.

⁷¹ Howard A. Scarrow, Canada Votes. (New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962), p.221. Subsequent election results are also compiled from Canada Votes, as well as the Canadian Parliamentary Guide.

⁷² Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.204.

ranks. The total popular vote for both the old-line parties in Alberta in 1921 was only 36.1 percent. In 1917, their share had been 96.5 percent, and it had never before slipped below 94.6 percent after 1905.

Liberal party fortunes declined for the same reason that Conservative Party fortunes never materialized. The tendency to practice non-partisan politics in Western Canada made sense. Economic interests of the new provinces were very different from those of the East and, more often than not, antagonistic. Parties which governed with the grace of the eastern electorate could not afford to be the loyal spokesmen of the hinterland prairie provinces. Contrary to what would become the norm for the West, the Liberals managed to govern for sixteen years in Alberta because they had been expediently planted there by a federal government which had seen the danger signals and moved to protect itself. It thrived because of the patronage advantages to be gained by a national and provincial party simultaneously enjoying power. It fell because:

1. that power advantage was lost;
2. the provincial party, which was never cohesive to begin with, suffered from infighting as reflected by the lack of cabinet solidarity and public squabbling;
3. the party was (like the Conservatives) too closely associated with the entrenched interests of the eastern elite, and thus could not adequately represent Alberta's interests.

As Anton and Regenstreif both note, the scandals that plagued the government provided evidence of Liberal incompetence.⁷³ But to understand fully why the UFA and, subsequently, Social Credit, were able to do what the Liberals could not, it is necessary to examine the social circumstances of the province. Thus it can be seen why the Liberals were such a poor option once the province gained maturity after World War One.

⁷³ Gordon Anton, "The Liberal Party in Alberta: An Organizational Case Study," M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1972. Anton's reasons for the 1921 loss were (1) scandal, (2) World War One conscription dispute, (3) advent of the Non-Partisan League, and (4) alienated homogeneous class farmers (Anton, pp.4-5). Regenstreif notes that the scandal-ridden Liberal regime of Premier Stewart could not co-opt the radical farmer's movement, which was bent on smashing the party system altogether (Regenstreif, op.cit., p.359).

III. The Years of Opposition: 1921-1971

A. Competing With the UFA

Alberta's Liberals were representative of all of the wrong things. They were an old-line party in Canada. Both they and the Conservatives were captives of the eastern commercial and industrial establishment. They could not be counted on for assistance in remedying sources of western grievances. Indeed, they had shown cleavages within their own ranks, and the centralist faction had won out. The province required its own popularly controlled political party committed to pressuring the federal government for solutions.⁷⁴

As David Smith points out in his study of Liberal losses on the prairies, the party's very fabric, and not just its loyalties, prevented it from transforming itself into the political body Alberta needed.⁷⁵

Liberal machinery and policy worked to alienate Albertans. Their identity as they perceived it was unique and would require a unique organization to reflect the interests of that identity politically, something the Liberals lacked.

Much scholarly writing has been produced which defends the presence of a homogeneous middle class in Alberta. In the forefront of this school of thought is C.B. Macpherson,

⁷⁴ John J. Barr, The Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of Social Credit in Alberta. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1974), p.15.

⁷⁵ David E. Smith, op. cit. p.xv.

who identified Alberta's unique composition and recognized it as the determinant of the peculiar political behaviour of the province. Macpherson's middle class was composed of independent commodity producers. As late as 1941 farmers still made up 41 percent of all gainfully employed people in the province, compared to 11 percent in Ontario and 16 percent in the nation.⁷⁶ Wage and salary earners outside of agriculture accounted for 71 percent of workers in Ontario and 63 percent in Canada, but only 41 percent in Alberta. The implications of this greater than average representation for political strategists is important. Apart from the 41 percent of the population who shared a common mode of production, there would be a sizable service industry catering to the needs of agriculture whose interests would be best served by ensuring the farmers' livelihoods were protected and allowed to flourish. Any political organization which was able to receive legitimate support as representatives of this group would need no further appeal to guarantee electoral success. This common source of livelihood, coupled with a shared sentiment that the province had nothing more than a quasi-colonial status, made the province's inhabitants reject the need for a traditional party system and even develop an aversion to it.⁷⁷

Everything the province wanted to express could be voiced through the medium of the UFA, a non-party organization with populist appeal. The Liberals, in

⁷⁶ Macpherson, op.cit., p.15.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.21.

contrast, were far from being a populist party at either level of government.

It must be recognized that the homogeneous nature of society is not so much a reality as it is a perception held by the society's members which results in their banding together against a common enemy for the protection of mutual interests. Macpherson discloses the origins of what he claims should be referred to as a false consciousness:

The common relationship to the market by which the petit-bourgeois class is defined does not produce a positive class consciousness. It gives rise, rather, to a common outlook better described as the absence of class consciousness and the presence of a false consciousness of society and of themselves.⁷⁸

Macpherson denies the reality of homogeneity in the class structure and goes as far as saying that even the independence of the farmer is illusory. Borrowing from Thorstein Veblen, he sees the farmer reduced to a position of wage earner by the ability of investment interests to "rig the market" against him.⁷⁹ This analysis of economics in the province has a lingering and haunting application to the oil industry in later years. Macpherson's proposal of false consciousness is made more precise by Donna Poetschke and Roberta McKown in their more recent analysis of class structure in Alberta:

Macpherson did not mean that Alberta was either a one class society or a classless society; rather, he attempted to demonstrate that in the period from the early 1900s to the mid 1940s, Alberta tended to have a "relatively homogeneous class composition."⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.225.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p.223.

⁸⁰ Donna M. Poetschke and Roberta E. McKown, "Perception of

Having noted the similarities among Albertans that served to pull them together, it is also necessary to examine other influences on their environment that made their perceptions different from those of other Canadians. Unlike eastern provinces, Alberta and the other prairie provinces had been much more receptive to American settlers. This factor exposed the West to populist ideas that were not nearly as widely entertained elsewhere in Canada.⁸¹ As Nelson Wiseman notes, American immigrants to Alberta were more numerous proportionately than American immigrants to other provinces.⁸² Most of these immigrants were Anglo-Saxons, who Wiseman states were less receptive to socialism. In his estimation, the Liberals had always been a party of mainly non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants and Catholics. The UFA was a party of Anglo-Saxons, composed mainly of Canadian, American and British born farmers.⁸³ In particular, the Non-Partisan League's timely arrival made a significant contribution to Alberta's attempts at vocalizing hostilities in the political arena. It gave rise to a non-party organization (in the guise of the UFA) that could speak on behalf of the independent commodity producers

⁸⁰(cont'd) Class in Alberta," in Caldarola, op.cit., p.193.

⁸¹ Tom Truman, "A Critique of S.M. Lipset's Article 'Value Differences Absolute or Relative: The English Speaking Democracies,'" in Orest M. Kruhlak, Richard Schultz and Sidney I. Pobihushchy, The Canadian Political Process: A Reader. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Ltd., 1970), p.55.

⁸² Nelson Wiseman, "The Pattern of Prairie Politics," In Party Politics in Canada. 5th ed. (Scarborough, Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1985), pp.243-4.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p.258.

against eastern imperialist policies.

While the Liberal Party was rejected in favour of a populist alternative partially because of its ties to the eastern establishment, the party might have moved to offset the tide of public opinion working against it. Such action was taken by the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan with satisfactory results, as chronicled by Richards and Pratt:

In Saskatchewan, Liberal Premier Martin outmanoeuvred the populists. By taking prominent farm leaders into his cabinet and dissociating the provincial party at a critical moment from its federal counterpart, he partially satisfied the populist demand for political organization independent of the "old line" parties. In 1921, before farmers could decide to enter provincial politics, he called a snap election. He won, and by the time of the next election the immediate threat to the established party system had ebbed. In 1929 the Saskatchewan Liberals were defeated, and replaced by a coalition government headed by the Conservatives but also containing a minority of Progressives and independents.⁸⁴

Alberta's Liberals failed to act in a similar manner as their Saskatchewan counterparts and, saddled with greater provincial debts (as noted previously), the Alberta party could not prolong its own life as the governing party.

Interests of the dominant class were well articulated by the UFA, which spoke of freight rates, grain trade regulations and roads as areas where legislative attention was required. The collective consciousness of the province's population was enhanced further through such undertakings as the United Grain Growers Association.⁸⁵ Considering the

⁸⁴ Richards and Pratt, op.cit., pp.30-31.

⁸⁵ Myron Johnson, "The Failure of the CCF in Alberta." (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1978), p.65.

sheer size of the farm interest and subsidiary service industry, the UFA did not have to concern itself with other factions who may have been disenchanted with the collectivist and populist experiments. As long as such a sizable part of the province thought their interests were being represented by the UFA, it was enough to cater to their concerns alone and not have to appeal to minority interests.

John McMenemy's study of party types helps illuminate the Alberta case. He views the populist party as one type of "movement party":

Movement parties have endured because of support from highly committed group and individual supporters. Both the membership and leadership of movement parties are rooted in sectional and class aggrieved communities not easily accommodated by elite-dominated fragment or parliamentary parties. From 1911 to the present on a large scale, farmers and organized labour have supported political action independent of the parliamentary parties.⁸⁶

He goes on to describe two types of movement parties. The populist party has been leader oriented; the socialist party has been value and program oriented. At both the federal and provincial levels, the Liberal Party has been neither, at least not to the degree discussed by McMenemy. It has been pragmatic at both levels and characterized by leadership difficulties at the provincial level. In federal politics, pragmatism never means giving in to the interests of a few at the expense of the many, and national parties must always

⁸⁶ John McMenemy, "Fragment and Movement Parties," in Political Parties in Canada. Edited by Conrad Winn and John McMenemy. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), p.44.

face the fact that elections are ultimately won or lost in the East.

The UFA may have fit McMenemy's "socialist" orientation better, even if it was not truly a socialist party by definition. But there was no sudden mustering of forces against these seemingly socialist measures. Alberta did not reject socialism. As Myron Johnson points out in his thesis, accidents of history led to the demise of the UFA and the CCF, which was linked to the former. Later, the Social Credit movement under Aberhart provided an example of the leader-oriented populist party in McMenemy's typology, something the Liberals were not.

The Liberal inability to fulfill the role of a movement party in the province was also reflected in its federal performance. Following the 1921 federal election, the party made little headway. In 1925, King managed to bring in four Liberals from Alberta into the House of Commons, but there were also nine Progressives and three Conservatives. Among the Liberals were former Premier Stewart and C.W. Cross. After the King-Byng crisis and resultant 1926 election, the province predictably punished the Conservatives for their protectionist stand, but did not return to the Liberals who saw only three of their candidates elected from Alberta. Instead, eleven UFA members were elected, nominally filling the shoes of the Progressives, which were breaking up as an entity. Among the Liberals was K.E. Blatchford representing Edmonton East, who was the second Liberal MP from Alberta

ever elected who had not been born in the East. The first, F.W. Gershaw, had been elected the year before and hailed originally from Manitoba. An ex-mayor of Edmonton, Blatchford was originally from Manitoba as well. A personification of provincial Liberal fortunes showed itself in the new MP for Calgary East, H.B. Adshead. Once a Liberal, he now sat as a Labour member.

The ignorance of the national party in its dealing with the province was blatant. Former Premier Stewart was appointed the token Alberta representative in King cabinets even when sitting in the House of Commons as a member for a Quebec constituency. In the early 1930s, he became a burden to provincial leader William Howson,⁸⁷ who attempted to rebuild a party that could challenge the UFA on its own terms. With a Liberal government in Ottawa, the provincial party should have been able to benefit from the apparent advantages. But the obvious lack of concern in the federal Liberal cabinets of the 1920s only served to improve the cause of the UFA.

Before Howson's more aggressive efforts, the party had endured under the guidance of J.T. Shaw and J.W. MacDonald. Both had lacked forcefulness,⁸⁸ disqualifying them from fulfilling McMenemy's definition of a leader-oriented movement party, even if their policies had allowed them to. Furthermore, MacDonald never sat as an MLA, restricting his ability to oppose the government credibly and seriously.

⁸⁷ Regenstreif, op.cit., p.245.

⁸⁸ Anton, op.cit., p.16.

The 1930 federal election results show how firmly Alberta had become entrenched in its tradition of practicing non-partisan politics. King's Liberals, at that time the governing party, took only three Alberta seats and 30 percent of the provincial vote. The Conservatives, who by this time had elected Albertan R.B. Bennett as leader, managed to take only four seats and 34 percent of the vote. The remaining nine seats were picked up by United Farmers. Although Progressive support had been strong in 1921, it was dwindling or disappearing everywhere, it seemed, except Alberta. In 1930 there were more Progressives elected from Alberta than in the rest of Canada.⁸⁹ Of the three Liberals elected, Stewart was returned as well as Gershaw of Medicine Hat. The new Liberal was J.F. Buckley, a United Church adherent and lawyer originally from Montana who had reclaimed Cross's old seat, lost to Kellner of the UFA in 1926. Unfortunately, the new blood was short lived and Buckley's seat was vacant in 1932, later to be filled in a byelection by a Conservative.

Liberal fortunes in provincial elections were identical to the federal showing. In 1926 the UFA had increased its popular support in the province to 43 percent. The Liberals and Conservatives combined outdistanced the UFA with 50 percent, but it was effectively split 27 percent and 23 percent, allotting only seven and four seats respectively.

⁸⁹ The Alberta members actually labelled themselves as UFA, but like the Progressives in Saskatchewan and the Liberal-Progressives in Manitoba, they all came under the federal Progressive banner.

This situation was repeated in 1930, when the UFA polled 39 percent and thirty-nine seats. The two major parties mustered 39 percent and seventeen seats, eleven of them Liberal and six Conservative.

Alberta's Liberals, although out of power after 1921, had managed to remain the official opposition throughout three elections. One would expect that fortunes would have turned their way in 1935, given the massive landslide King experienced. The federal Liberals enjoyed keen support from every province except Alberta, where they held only one of the seventeen seats.⁹⁰ The province had truly become the bad boy of Confederation for the Liberal Party. In the same way that the province had elected Progressives and UFA members to Ottawa during the UFA's provincial tenure, Alberta elected, in 1935, a Social Credit government which took fifty-seven of the sixty-three seats. The provincial Liberals, still the official opposition, were reduced to four seats.

There are two factors to consider when determining why the Social Credit movement was able to seemingly arise out of nowhere as a political force and displace the opposition Liberals. One must consider how the Liberals erred if indeed they ever had a chance, since anti-party sentiment had become so strong in Alberta. Secondly, Social Credit itself must be examined to understand how this populist movement

⁹⁰ The lone Liberal was J.A. McKinnon from Edmonton West, Charles Stewart's old riding. Not only had Edmonton West been faithful to the Liberals, but McKinnon had increased the Liberal margin of victory from 263 to 1,451 votes.

was able to do what the Liberals were impotent to do--appeal to Alberta's homogeneous class.

Premier Brownlee's UFA government was rocked by scandal in its later days. The most significant blotch on the government's record involved the Premier himself, in which he was charged with the seduction of a seventeen-year-old girl who served as a stenographer in the government office. Although nothing of lasting legal importance came of the action against him, the publicity was a main contributing factor to his demise. The great publicity that surrounded the affair was generally attributed to the Liberals, who hoped to make the most of it at the polls.⁹¹ It backfired on them. They survived the election with only four seats. Social Credit leader Aberhart made the most gains from the affair, presenting a clear Christian image in contrast to the scandal-ridden UFA. In the 1935 election, Social Credit carried every non-metropolitan riding.

Brownlee's personal indiscretions were not the only factor that shadowed his populist image, nor that of his successor, Premier Reid. The UFA had promised to stay clear of the old-party model by developing a decision making process that would have input from the grassroots.⁹² But political realities necessitated a breaking of this promise and decision making became solely a cabinet function. When

⁹¹ Barr, op.cit., p.36.

⁹² J. Anthony Long and F.Q. Quo, "Alberta: Politics of Consensus," In Canadian Provincial Politics, The Party Systems of the Ten Provinces, 2nd ed. Edited by Martin Robin. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1978), p.4.

those decisions failed to ease farmers' doubts, the incompatibility of direct democracy and the parliamentary system was proven.⁹³ The province did not turn to the opposition Liberals, who had nothing to offer in terms of organization or policy. Social Credit did have something to offer populist desires. Provincial Liberals foresaw the tide of Social Credit appeal and attempted to stop it. There was an effort made to introduce Social Credit reform into the provincial Liberal Party.⁹⁴ In 1933 the party's brief to the MacMillan Commission on banking and currency suggested a mild type of Social Credit reform. Further indications show that the provincial Liberal Party realized its shortcomings and wished to do something about the situation. An attempt was made to organize a Western Liberal Conference to develop western policy with proper western appeal.⁹⁵ Mackenzie King was appalled and his political bosses in the West opposed it.⁹⁶ The conference proceeded, but it was purely an Alberta undertaking. The reluctance of the national party to bend to its provincial wing in an effort to assist its fortunes demonstrates two things: (1) the inability of the national Liberal Party to understand western needs and desires and (2) the roots of discontent that were growing between a provincial party which was beginning to understand its own region, and a federal wing which served as an albatross.

⁹³ *ibid.*, p.5.

⁹⁴ Reginald Whitaker, The Governing Party: Organizing and Financing the Liberal Party of Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp.360-361.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

Apart from the dispute over policy, there was no apparent resident organization in the Calgary area in the 1935 federal campaign.⁹⁷ Given the situation of the Liberals, the province chose the populist Social Credit in both the federal and provincial elections. Many Liberals voted Social Credit. In contrast to the Alberta party's fortunes, by the time 1935 passed into the New Year, King was solidly re-established in Ottawa and seven of the provinces had Liberal governments.

B. The Social Credit Dynasty

It is no wonder Social Credit policy was the envy of the provincial Liberals. It had all of the ingredients a populist platform could aspire to. Drawing from the theories of Major Douglas, the movement diagnosed society's problems not simply as capitalism, but finance, or the inability of most men to use the capitalist system to their advantage.⁹⁸ Douglas's practical solution to this was to put credit back into the hands of the people by issuing dividends and paying out subsidies in aid of lower prices. Economic stimulation instigated by these means would combat the incidental but important problems of unemployment. The state was identified as part of the mechanism by which financiers increased their power over individuals, making them subservient.⁹⁹ This rhetoric had immediate sympathetic support from people who

⁹⁷ Regenstreif, op.cit., p.245.

⁹⁸ Macpherson, op.cit., p.97.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.125.

viewed themselves as exploited by those who controlled the purse strings from elsewhere in Canada. To claim that Social Credit gained power solely on the merit of its political and economic opportunism would be a great distortion of fact. Sociological factors cannot be ignored and are of paramount importance when analyzing the popularity of the movement.

All political parties in the province, Liberals included, would have done well to take lessons in leadership and organization from Aberhart. Using the appeal gained from his radio broadcasts, and the organization already established through his Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, Aberhart transformed these tools into formidable political weapons. He never missed a chance to further the growth of organization, and, as leader was adamant that his secondary leaders be as vigilant. As John Irving notes in The Social Credit movement in Alberta:

It was a cardinal principle with Aberhart that the response of the people at meetings addressed by himself or his speakers must always lead to the organization of the Social Credit movement in centres being visited for the first time. Further, any organization that already existed as a result of a previous visit must be consolidated and expanded on subsequent visits. Speakers were therefore instructed to take immediate advantage of the enthusiasm they had engendered by organizing, or reorganizing, study groups at the conclusion of their meetings. The organization of such groups involved, of course, the election of officers, consisting of at least a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and; usually, several committee members. But Aberhart insisted that definite arrangements must also be made to hold regular meetings and to secure from either speaker or the Bible Institute sufficient Social Credit literature for study and discussion.

The response of the people in small towns and villages to this technique was usually so

enthusiastic that a study group organized by a visiting speaker would lead to the organization of additional study groups by members who had been trained in the initial group.¹⁰⁰

As Irving goes on to explain, the enthusiasm of the groups in the rural areas would spill over into neighbouring areas to a point where groups would be formed with no town or village connection whatsoever. In Irving's estimation, such groups transformed Social Credit into "the most disciplined and powerful political machine Canada has ever known".¹⁰¹ Overwhelmed by this organization which also boasted dedication from its membership, the Liberal Party, which had expected to make gains in the 1935 provincial election, was reduced to a paltry opposition existing in the shadows of the mammoth Social Credit victory.

Aberhart's movement gained overwhelming support through its religious appeal, which managed to attract the attention of Alberta's peculiarly homogeneous class and others who remained outside of this identity. Sectarian religious groups enjoyed growth in Alberta far beyond that experienced in other provinces. Viewed as institutions of social and religious protest, they provided a welcome alternative for a population which rejected ties with the institutions of eastern dominance, yet maintained an avenue for Christian religious expression.¹⁰² Traditional denominations continued receiving support from conservative middle and upper

¹⁰⁰ John A. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p.280.

¹⁰¹ Irving, op.cit., p.281.

¹⁰² W.E. Mann, Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955), p.5.

classes, losing support in the rural areas during the First World War and the Depression.¹⁰³ Simultaneously, the Liberals were losing support. They continued to receive their support from the same classes that maintained support for the traditional denominations. By 1946, fundamental sects could boast a membership of 53,790 compared to the 216,000 members of the traditional Protestant denominations, most of whom were only marginally active. The sectarian group was an enthusiastic social force. Sectarrians fell below the provincial average for education attainment, were from slightly less than average income brackets in rural areas and only average working class backgrounds in urban areas.¹⁰⁴ Liberal support was coming from the middle class populations, the bulk of which was urban oriented. The larger the urban area, the greater the Liberal percentage of the vote, a direct contrast to Social Credit support.

There is much to be made of the enthusiasm afforded sectarian churches by their members. The majority of the clergy in traditional churches were, even as late as 1935, schooled in the East.¹⁰⁵ Educated far beyond the levels of their congregations they became objects of historical disdain for the East and brought much discredit upon themselves by rigidly adhering to customs and views of the world synonymous with those in Eastern Canada, even in the face of mounting adversity.¹⁰⁶ Those who were disenchanted

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p.31.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, pp.35-6.

¹⁰⁵ Mann, *op.cit.*, p.92.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.197.

but could not force themselves to make the break from their traditional denominations were given some respite through Aberhart's ingenious use of the radio. His broadcasts were listened to by thousands with "impediments to sectarian participation" whether it be due to geographic isolation or a reluctance to break traditional affiliations.¹⁰⁷

There can be no doubt about the role played by the manipulative use of radio. By 1947, fundamentalists in Calgary accounted for 7 3/4 hours of Sunday air time compared to 5 3/4 hours used by the institutionalized churches.¹⁰⁸ Radio's usefulness for Social Credit had been realized long before then, however. The demographic and social composition of the province made it ripe for radio communication as a source of information and entertainment. In a society where independent commodity producers lived on isolated family-oriented farms that were often far from the influence of a town or city, entertainment was a real concern, especially given the severity and length of winters which virtually cut people off from the outside world.¹⁰⁹ With the mountains acting as a barrier for effective transmission from British Columbia, and sheer distance from the East making that option unrealistic, Alberta stations had a captive audience which shared a relatively homogeneous perception of its social existence. Aberhart, a master orator, was able to capitalize further on this windfall by

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.127.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p.129.

providing programs that gave the listeners what they needed most--family-oriented programs that found a common appeal among both farmers and lower class groups.¹¹⁰ As noted by W.E. Mann in his classic study of the phenomenon of the growth of sects in Alberta, Aberhart's ability to appeal to the broad middle class determined his success. By drawing in the peripheral groups, once again a perceived class consciousness was created among voters. Saddled with internal disputes and leadership that was ineffective, the Alberta Liberals could not hope to compete with the charismatic Aberhart.

Nor did the situation improve for the Liberals after 1935. After the federal Liberal sweep of 1935 (supported by every province but Alberta) concern for the party's fortunes in the province became almost non-existent in Ottawa, where the government was confident that the electoral successes could be sustained without the help of the troublesome province. This was unfortunate for those Liberals with provincial aspirations as they truly wanted to be seen as a party capable of governing on behalf of Albertans. Feeling that any money spent in Alberta was a bad investment, the national party neglected to give the province even its fair share of campaign funds.¹¹¹ Despite the presence of a Liberal MP and senators from the province, King excluded them from his cabinet, an extension of his punishment to

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Whitaker, *op.cit.*, p.361.

Alberta for its poor support at the polls.¹¹² Instead, McKinnon acted as a lieutenant for Northern Alberta, with Senator Buchanan acting as the southern lieutenant. To show further disdain, Prime Minister King did not even deal with the Alberta lieutenants directly but had them operate through regional party boss and magnate J.G. Gardiner of Saskatchewan. Thus, officially, Liberals in Alberta were left to row their own course, cut off quite directly from the mother ship.

And attempt to row their own course they did. E.L. Gray became the new leader of the provincial party in 1937 and immediately embarked on an aggressive strategy to topple the Social Credit governors. All opposition parties had been reduced to fledgling strength, together totalling no more than 46 percent of the popular vote in 1935, despite the presence of two former governing parties in their ranks. Gray's option was bold, but pragmatic. He attempted to group his Liberals with the Conservatives, UFA, the People's League, the Unity Party and other elements into a united front. He received tacit support from federal organizer Norman Lambert, but Gardiner would not allow it, denouncing the People's League as a Tory plot.¹¹³ In an Edmonton East byelection in 1938, Gardiner used his Saskatchewan machine and the Liberal candidate placed second, but with no show of support from Gray. His only contribution was to call for an

¹¹² *ibid.*, p.362.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p.363.

end to Saskatchewan domination of Alberta's Liberal Party affairs.¹¹⁴

The federal-provincial rift in Alberta Liberalism was very apparent by the late 1930s. Gray had inherited the problem and his persistence in pushing for a union of Alberta's opposition groups deepened the chasm. The issue precipitated into a constitutional crisis in 1937.

Alberta Lieutenant-Governor J.C. Bowen had been Gray's predecessor as provincial Liberal leader before his vice-regal appointment. As Liberal leader, his reputation for aggression and determination failed to spill over into his legislative performances, where he thought it fitting that the opposition should help the government to do a better job.¹¹⁵ He was honest and sincere, but not what the floundering Liberals needed. When the new Social Credit government attempted to initiate its reforms in the guise of three acts of legislation, Bowen, as Lieutenant-Governor, reserved the legislation for the Governor-in-Council.¹¹⁶ In response to what the Social Credit government considered to be another case of partisan stifling of western interests by

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp.363-4.

¹¹⁵ Anton, *op.cit.*, p.18.

¹¹⁶ Bowen had earlier assented to three acts of legislation that were later disallowed by the federal government. These were The Credit of Alberta Regulation Act, The Bank Employees Civil Rights Act and The Judicature Act Amendment Act. The three acts he later reserved for the consideration of the Governor-in-Council were The Accurate News and Information Bill, The Bank Taxation Bill and the Bill amending the Credit of Alberta Regulation Act. The federal cabinet disallowed the legislation. On March 4, 1938, these latter three bills were declared ultra vires by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Ottawa, Aberhart cut off the Lieutenant-Governor from funds budgeted for his secretarial services, transportation and the upkeep of Government House. Bowen, in turn, discussed with Gray the possibility of forming a unity government.¹¹⁷ King and Gardiner both protested. The fact that Bowen was the immediate past leader of the Alberta Liberals did little to endear Liberals in the hearts of Albertans who had elected, by a huge majority, a populist movement. That Bowen and Gray had discussed the option of a united opposition forming a government did little to patch relations with the national party.

Although these turmoils of the 1930s worked towards washing the Liberals out of provincial favour forever, the 1940 federal election saw a singular and guarded resurgence. This can be attributed to the war and the desire to support the federal government's effort. King's party enjoyed the greatest support seen in Alberta since 1917, and the greatest it would enjoy again with 38 percent of the popular vote and seven of the province's seventeen federal seats. Among the seven elected, Gershaw was returned after being defeated in the 1935 Social Credit sweep, coming back with his best majority yet to beat incumbent Social Credit member Mitchell, who had switched to the CCF. McKinnon, the lone Liberal of 1935, was re-elected. He had been made a Minister without Portfolio in 1939, and Minister of Trade and Commerce in 1940. It is interesting to note that of the five

¹¹⁷ Whitaker, *op.cit.*, p.365.

novice Liberal MPs, four were United Church members and lawyers. F.C. Dechêne of Athabasca was of French Canadian descent and a Roman Catholic. Gershaw also adhered to the United Church, but was a doctor. Although supported in 1940 because of the war, the party still sadly reflected the eastern establishment in its members' religious adherence and by the predominance of lawyers. In the next election, all were tossed out except McKinnon and Dechêne, neither of them United Church adherents, neither of them lawyers.

That same year the Liberal Party was a non-entity in the provincial election. Fielding only two candidates, it elected only one. Party leader Gray sat in the legislature as an independent to promote unity during the war, part of the coalition of opposition parties and independent MLAs which had banded together to present a more effective opposition to the Aberhart machine.

The war seemed to quiet Liberal tempers. If one considers the seven seats gained in the 1940 election as a sign of renewed vigour for Liberalism in Alberta, it would be a mistake. Support for a government fighting a war and support for the federal Liberal Party were two different things. Not to give the government the wrong impression, in 1945 Alberta reduced its membership in the federal Liberal caucus from seven to two. As noted earlier, only McKinnon and Dechêne survived. McKinnon's majority was greatly reduced from its 1940 high of 8,296 to 1,997, but again Edmonton West had returned a Liberal. Dechêne's majority was

also reduced, from 1,164 to 478. In both cases they were followed by a Social Credit candidate. A year before, Social Credit had captured fifty-one of the fifty-seven seats up for grabs in the provincial election. For the federal government which had disallowed legislation of the populist provincial regime, the message was clear.

McKinnon was replaced as lieutenant in Alberta in 1944 after being promoted to the Senate. His successor in both Edmonton West and the cabinet was George Prudham, generally regarded as being ineffective as a minister or a representative of the province.¹¹⁸ He fulfilled the role of a federal Liberal well in some measure however, in that he preferred not to aid the provincial party which by now was scraping the very bottom of the barrel.¹¹⁹ His interests lay elsewhere. A building contractor, his firm continued to do business with the federal government during his cabinet tenure.¹²⁰ After a leaderless seven years, the Alberta Liberals had placed their bets on Harper Prowse in 1947. Apart from the inherited organizational nightmare, Prowse had to contend with the fact that the federal party would have been pleased to write off the provincial party completely. Having reached some degree of accord with the ruling Social Credit government in Dominion-Provincial relations,¹²¹ Ottawa did not want to antagonize the provincial governors on their own turf by appearing to

¹¹⁸ Whitaker, op.cit., p.367.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ *ibid.*

support an overly exuberant new provincial Liberal leader. In their minds it was a losing battle to try and gain political ground in Alberta anyway, and the province was not needed to ensure a majority in the House of Commons.

Of the five Liberals elected to Parliament from Alberta in 1949, of which Prudham was one, there were again three United Church members. The odd man out was John Decore of Vegreville, a Ukrainian lawyer marking the advent of his family into the ranks of notable Liberals. He also had the distinction, along with new Jasper-Edson MP J.W. Welbourn, of being one of the first two Liberal MPs from Alberta born in the province. Despite forty-four years of Confederation, and many more of territorial government before 1905, the party had taken as long to elect a candidate whose place of origin was the province itself. Ever popular in Athabasca, F.C. Dechêne was also returned as the representative of his riding.

In the 1944 provincial election, the Liberals had been wiped off of the map. In 1948, under Prowse's leadership, they managed to return two members. Forceful and articulate,¹²² Prowse gave the provincial party specific direction for the first time in thirty years. Although an Alberta Liberal Association (ALA) had been formed in 1936, its goals and purposes were sketchy, because of the ongoing family feud between national and provincial family members into which it was born. Prowse gave the ALA a definite

¹²² Barr, op.cit., p.215.

provincial orientation,¹²³ although his earlier attempts at building included a conciliatory attitude towards the federal party. In his mind, it was desirable to maintain one organization for the benefit of all. After disputes with Prudham, the temper changed. Prudham had allegedly gone so far as to discourage Alberta oil companies from contributing to the provincial Liberal coffers.¹²⁴ The loss was significant for a party hoping to capitalize on its suddenly increased popularity. Such support would have helped the party greatly, but instead found a place in the Tory warchest. Prowse would openly call for Prudham's dismissal, implanting himself as the new spokesman for the new provincial Liberal machine. Despite the ongoing federal-provincial dispute this practice fueled, Prowse forged ahead. His timing was good. Alberta was changing, and changing in a way that could benefit a Liberal Party dedicated to the province's concerns unhindered by its federal counterpart.

Urbanization trends in Alberta had started long before Social Credit's ascendancy to power, and it continued afterwards. In 1931, only four years before the UFA rejection, 51 percent of the population lived on farms, with 22 percent in either Edmonton or Calgary, and most of the other 27 percent in rural non-farming communities.¹²⁵ In

¹²³ Whitaker, op.cit., p.367.

¹²⁴ Joseph Wearing, The L-Shaped Party: The Liberal Party of Canada 1958-1980. (Toronto: Mc-Graw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1981), p.126.

¹²⁵ Johnson, op.cit., p.59.

1934, 62 percent of the population was classed as rural, or outside the bounds of the larger urban centres. By 1961 this was reduced to 36 percent. Urbanization was occurring quite rapidly and consistently. Further evidence of this is demonstrated by table 2, which focuses on farms in particular.

Table 2
DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF ALBERTA
FARMS AND FARMERS

Year	Number of Farms	Percentage of Population on Farms
1901	9,479	---
1911	60,559	---
1916	67,977	---
1921	82,944	---
1926	77,130	---
1931	97,408	---
1936	100,358	---
1941	99,732	---
1946	89,541	---
1951	84,315	36.7
1956	79,424	---
1961	73,212	21.6
1966	69,411	19.2
1971	62,702	14.6

SOURCES: "A Historical Series of Statistics for Alberta," Alberta Department of Agriculture, p.135. and "Agriculture Statistics Yearbook," Alberta Department of Agriculture, 1975, p.74, and used in Grace Skogstad's article "Farmers and Farm Unions in the Society and Politics of Alberta." In *Society and Politics of Alberta: Research Papers*. Edited by Carlo Caldarola. (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1970), p.230.

These statistics can be interpreted in relation to other trends in mobility. While table 2 shows an increase in farms up to 1936, with one interruption in 1926, one must remember that the non-farm population was expanding also. The decline in farms after 1936 was not accompanied by a decline in

general population, but an increase.

The result of this shift was that the independent commodity producer, the backbone of both the UFA and Social Credit, was no longer the major economic interest in the province. As the class that looked to populism as a political alternative disappeared, so did the support it generated for Social Credit. In the earlier days surrounding 1935, Social Credit had managed to gain the sympathy of peripheral groups outside the expansive farm community with its media-enhanced Christian appeal. While these populist ideologies appealed to the petite bourgeoisie in 1935, this perceived class was no longer the largest class in the province, and if Social Credit was not to disappear with the class that promoted it, some adjustments would have to be made.

The shift in population structure and the tiredness of the twenty-year-old government worked hand in hand with Prowse's leadership, organizational ability and casting aside of the national party. In 1952, two more seats were added to the two held by the party and, in 1955, the party posed a threat to the Social Credit dynasty when it captured fifteen of the legislature's sixty-one seats, leaving the government with thirty-seven. Social Credit's share of the popular vote had diminished from an all time high of 56 percent to 46 percent.

These gains were purely a provincial phenomenon, and the credit must go to Prowse. In the 1953 federal election,

the Liberals were reduced from five to four MPs, with A.F. MacDonald of Edmonton East losing to his foe from 1949, Social Credit candidate A. Holowach. Decore and Dechêne were returned, but with decreased margins. Prudham, the province's representative in the cabinet, won his constituency comfortably. The new member was R.F.L. Hanna of Edmonton Strathcona, a life insurance salesman born in Ireland and a member of the United Church.

Circumstances surrounding the resurgence of support for the provincial Liberals give credibility to the hypotheses about Liberal Party fortunes in Alberta. First, if the party is to be successful, it must speak on behalf of provincial interests while shedding outright any attachment to the federal party's indifferent or antagonistic viewpoint. Secondly, it must have an organization motivated for its own provincial purposes, and a leader capable of articulating the province's needs. Prowse was able to do all of this during his tenure, and the results speak for themselves. Why he was unable to continue driving the bandwagon is a tale of tragic historic circumstances for his resurgent Liberals.

Prowse's provincial Liberals were dragged down with the federal Liberal Party in 1957. Despite having four incumbent Liberal MPs from Alberta before the election, the only one to survive the 1957 election was Dechêne.¹²⁶ The cause was

¹²⁶ The perennial member for Athabasca had been elected for the fifty time, but only by a 424 vote margin, compared to 1,348 in 1953. Athabasca had proven to be a Liberal stronghold with brief interludes between the tenures of Cross, Buckley and Dechêne. Also elected in 1957 was Social Credit candidate H.A. (Bud) Olson of Medicine Hat. He would

not the Diefenbaker bandwagon. The new PC leader had captured only 28 percent of the Alberta popular vote. His party had gained exactly the same percentage as the Liberals and only two more seats. John Meisel's study of the 1957 election reveals that the Liberals fielded a number of good candidates, successful men, with impressive records in local politics, who were attracted to the federal government's success.¹²⁷ Yet only one was victorious at the polls. David Smith points out that, unlike the rest of the country which was occupied with the pipeline debate, wheat determined the outcome of the 1957 federal election in the West.¹²⁸ The West had a record volume of 670 million bushels of unsold wheat stockpiled, although average annual marketing of all grain between 1945 and 1948 had been only 458 million bushels.¹²⁹ The federal government would do nothing to move the grain or grant easier credit.¹³⁰

Diefenbaker's populist appeal was translated into practical policy after the election. Less than a month in office, his new government passed the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, instantly winning over the Province of Alberta. The 1958 election proved the importance of the sensitivity to the grain issue. Alberta joined the

¹²⁶ (cont'd) lose in 1958, but be re-elected in 1962, 1963 and 1965. In 1968 he would be elected as a Liberal and would serve in Trudeau's cabinet first as an MP, and later as a senator.

¹²⁷ John Meisel, The Canadian General Election of 1957. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), pp.182-3.

¹²⁸ Smith, op.cit., p.27.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p.28.

Diefenbaker bandwagon, the PCs winning every one of the province's seats. Even Social Credit, which had regained thirteen seats in 1957, were eliminated.¹³¹ Alberta did not join the Conservative swing for the same reason as the East, or even British Columbia. Alberta joined to support a federal government that was finally paying attention to its needs, a lesson the federal Liberals might have done well to study.

Prowse's victories ended at the same time when, in 1959, his party was reduced to one seat, after his own resignation a year earlier. While he was rewarded with a Senate seat in the mid 1960s, the provincial party returned to its usual leaderless pattern of disorganization.

Prowse was replaced by Grant MacEwan. His predecessor had been a hard act to follow, and MacEwan made no gains, although he would later be an amiable lieutenant-governor. MacEwan was replaced by David Hunter in 1962, who managed to secure the Liberals another seat in the legislature, bringing the grand total to two. But he too disappeared a year later after the 1963 provincial election amidst another provincial-federal dispute over financing. The 1962 federal election had failed to elect a Liberal from the province. Social Credit candidate H.A. Olson was elected again, as was Social Credit leader Robert Thompson. They were the only deviations in a Tory sweep of Alberta, a sweep that was not

¹³¹ Diefenbaker took 60 percent of the provincial popular vote, the highest ever for any party in a federal election in Alberta. The Liberals took less than 14 percent, similarly their lowest showing ever to that date.

reflected elsewhere. The election a year later saw little change, despite the fragmentation of the PC party and its losses elsewhere. Alberta's lone Liberal MP was Harry Hays from Calgary South, who won by 1,859 votes in a riding that had elected his predecessor three times by wide margins, never less than 9,000 votes. A former Social Credit member, his election openly marked the beginning of a relationship between the movement and the Liberals in the province, a relationship that would rear its head often in the following years. Hays was eliminated in 1965, losing to the PC candidate by 115 votes. With no MPs in the Pearson caucus and only two Liberals in the legislature, Alberta was again truly a wasteland for the party.

Hunter was replaced by Adrian Berry who made concrete moves towards wresting control of finances away from the federal party machine. His plan was to appoint a fundraiser of his choice. The result would be control of fundraising within the province. When the expected concern was voiced by federal and provincial members of the party, Berry resigned.

Like most provincial Liberal constitutions in the 1960s, Alberta's stated objectives were to organize the Liberal Party in the federal and provincial ridings and promote the election of federal and provincial candidates in the province.¹³² MPs were given membership in the provincial organization, as were defeated candidates and senators. A string of provincial leaders had given up in frustration

¹³² Regenstreif, op.cit., p.241.

because of dealings with the federal party since 1921, and especially in the decade preceding 1967. This demonstrated that the organizational arrangement was not in the best interests of the provincial party. Despite a similar arrangement, the PCs escaped the ill effects that plagued the Liberals because the PC party was no longer regarded as anathema to Alberta interests. Support for the federal Conservatives had been steady, beginning in 1958, and had remained loyal to Diefenbaker, despite his losses elsewhere. The Liberals could not hope for similar fortunes. Ties to a federal government which had worked against the province could only hurt the provincial party. In the 1960s the relationship proved deadly. Alberta was ripe for change. It was no longer a province composed solely of independent commodity producers. Oil had altered the very social fabric of the province. Social Credit, not keeping up with the changes, found itself unable to answer to the demands of the new emerging consciousness. There was room for a party that could to this finally to come of age.

Larry Pratt traces the emergence of a new class consciousness centred not on agriculture, but on oil:

Alberta's large and growing middle classes, nurtured by twenty-five years of oil and gas development, acceded to political power in the provincial election of August 1971. In retrospect that election...represented an inevitable, though much delayed, response of the electoral system (delayed, in part, by the Social Credit's careful gerrymandering and the deliberate underrepresentation of the cities in the legislature) to post-war population growth, urbanization, and secularization--demographic and social trends that were underway before Leduc and

accelerated by the dramatic effects of rapid oil and gas development on the provincial economy and labour force. Ironically, Social Credit's resource management policies and its discretionary spending of oil and gas rents in such areas as secondary education and the growth of municipalities helped to undermine the party's own social and political base--the rural, small town, petite bourgeoisie....

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This is further demonstrated by statistics. When looking at the share of total value added in goods-producing industries in the province, in the years 1935 to 1971 agriculture dropped from 54 to 14 percent.¹³⁴ In the same time period, manufacturing increased from 16 percent to 20 percent, construction from 14 to 23 percent and, most significantly, extraction of resources increased from 11 to 39 percent.

Just as Social Credit had been a party representative of the old dominant class, so the provincial Conservatives proved to be the party of the new petite bourgeoisie. As provincial history had demonstrated, the party that mustered support of the dominant class would be the government. This relationship between dominant classes and parties is summarized by Panitch, who states:

If the party is one of the places through which the class is united as a social and cultural identity, one may speak of it properly as a party of a certain class. It may well be, and the evidence is suggestive, that this is the case for the "new middle class" with the Parti Québécois and the

¹³³ Larry Pratt, "The State and Province Building: Alberta's Development Strategy", in The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power. Edited by Leo Panitch. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.144.

¹³⁴ John Richards and Larry Pratt, Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1979), p.160.

Alberta Tories.¹³⁵

Throughout the 1960s, Social Credit Premier Manning did nothing to appease the new petite bourgeoisie class which by then was an established fact, restless for change. No major policy initiatives were introduced, no new faces appeared in the cabinet.¹³⁶ Rather than launch an offensive and take the initiative in province building by exploiting its own newly realized resource wealth, Social Credit became defensive and struggled to maintain power by realigning electoral boundaries. The initiative not taken by Social Credit was not missed by the Conservatives. It could have been taken by the Liberals, had they foreseen what was happening, and cast off the official ties and dependence on the federal party. They would also have needed leadership as capable of articulating Alberta's new needs as Lougheed's was.

The Conservatives presented an economic policy that offered solutions to traditional economic woes and spoke of Alberta in a modern vision that was readily accepted by the new dominant class. Conscious of the fact that this new dominant class also viewed the province as an exploited hinterland, like the class that preceeded it, the Tories used a mixture of old rhetoric with new vision that provided a practical and desirable alternative for the future. As

¹³⁵ Leo Panitch, "Elites, Classes and Power in Canada", in Canadian Politics in the 1980s. Edited by Michael S. Whittington and Glen Williams. (Toronto: Methuen Publishing, 1984), p.246.

¹³⁶ Ernest Watkins, The Golden Province: A Political History of Alberta. (Calgary: Sandstone Publishing Ltd., 1980), p.204.

Larry Pratt notes in his analysis of province building tactics:

Perceiving that the province was near maturity as an oil-producing region and that its position as a land-locked, thinly populated hinterland far from distant markets was impeding growth, the Conservatives accepted the need for an activist government to steer the province's development...Lougheed argued the necessity of fostering "natural" industries--such as petrochemicals and agricultural processing--out of the province's strong resource base. An internal government memorandum on this subject, dated 1974, states that the province is at the point of transition "from a primarily extractive economy, where our resources are exported for processing by other parts of Canada, and the rest of the world, to an industrialized economy which will see further processing of our raw materials, increased manufacturing and...satisfying employment opportunities for Albertans." But, the document cautions, unless the government manages growth and steers the economy in desired directions, this transition might not occur and the province could become even more dependent on its natural resources.¹³⁷

Lougheed's rhetoric was quickly turned into action with the creation of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and an aggressive pro-resource industry and provincial rights stance against Ottawa. The Trust Fund's explicit purpose was to ensure the future of Alberta in resource manufacturing ventures by assisting interested investors situate themselves.

The extent to which Lougheed's Conservatives made themselves the spokesmen for a new middle class is the focus of Michael Georgeson in his case study of Alberta as a one-party dominant system. Rather than believe that the

¹³⁷ Larry Pratt, "The State and Province Building," in Panitch, The Canadian State, p.148.

interests dependent on the resource industry were a class unto themselves before 1971, Georgeson gives the Conservatives credit for replacing a mass movement with a coalition of minority oppositions.¹³⁸ Thus, the Tories were able to unify a diverse population and create a unified class consciousness. Their party played the ultimate role in aggregating interests.

Whether or not Georgeson is correct in his assumption that the Conservatives "created" the new class consciousness does not alter the fact that such an identity exists which, however false the perception may be, remains real for its members. The maintenance of this common class identity is the essence of the one party system in Alberta. By uniting the interests of all, conflicts are eliminated which would otherwise create opposition for the governing party. As noted by Garth Stevenson:

Conflict between different sections of the bourgeoisie also appears at the provincial level, especially in Ontario which has a fairly diverse economy. (This explains why Ontario can support two viable bourgeois political parties, while Alberta has only one.)¹³⁹

If Stevenson is correct, then the provincial Liberals missed a chance from which it will be hard to recover. In this scenario of a province that can accommodate only one party of the petite bourgeoisie, the Liberals can only hope to usurp the Conservatives if opposition votes are not split.

¹³⁸ Michael R. Georgeson, "A One-Party Dominant System: The Case of Alberta," (M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1974), pp.123-4.

¹³⁹ Garth Stevenson, "Federalism and the Canadian State," in Panitch, The Canadian State, p.91.

The Liberals, then, have to become the sole heirs of the petite bourgeoisie when the Conservatives are no longer deemed to be the spokesmen. The attempt to usurp the Conservatives and transform the Liberal Party into a viable organization unladen with its irresponsible federal counterpart, is the story of the Alberta Liberals in the 1970s and 1980s.

IV. The Years in the Wilderness: 1971-85

Lougheed's Tories filled a gap that the Liberals might have, had their circumstances not been so dire. After Berry's 1967 resignation, the provincial leader's position was filled by Mike Maccagno, a long standing MLA. He was gone by 1968 to test his fortunes in the federal election.

Maccagno failed to win a federal seat, but four Liberal candidates in Alberta were victorious, riding on a wave of Trudeaumania that even spilled over slightly into Alberta. Former Social Credit MP H.A. Olson was elected again in Medicine Hat, but as a Liberal. In the 1967 provincial election, the Social Credit caucus had been cut from sixty-five to fifty-five members. In 1971, it was reduced further to twenty-five and moved into the opposition. The next time around, in 1975, the party would only win four seats.

The Conservatives effectively filled the right side of the political spectrum in the province and, according to the Liberal Party's youth, the provincial Liberals would have to move the way Schreyer's NDP in Manitoba did if they hoped to escape extinction.¹⁴⁰ A forty page paper presented by the Young Liberals at an Edmonton Regional Conference proposed such a shift, a move favoured by provincial President Jack Lowery. The proposal was a reflection of the times and the

¹⁴⁰ "Only move left can save party," Edmonton Journal, November 10, 1969.

people who drafted it--youth caught up in the furor of reform that characterized the era. It skirted the main issue, that of party organization and leadership.

Numerous measures were taken by Lowery to offset the Tory victory that would put his party in a truly impotent position. Former Social Credit member Bud Olson had run successfully in the 1968 federal election as Liberals. An attempt to transact an alliance with Social Credit was made by Lowery in 1969. MPs Pat Mahoney (Calgary South) and Olson favoured a move to create a separate federal organization in Alberta.¹⁴¹ They spoke on behalf of the federal party in general when they made it known that Social Credit support was needed in Alberta if they were to keep their seats. Prowse had experienced similar pronouncements a decade earlier from George Prudham, who feared Prowse's resurgent provincial party might upset the balance the federal party had struck with the ruling Social Credit in Alberta. Thus, Prudham had been unwilling to support Prowse's efforts, and the surge slumped as quickly as it had risen. This time, Lowery hoped to make gains at the provincial level through a merger with Social Credit. Although cognizant of the encroaching threat to his dynasty that the Tories presented, Premier Strom rejected the overtures, but invited any Liberals who wished to join his party. The merger attempt backfired on Lowery when, left without a merger, he lost Liberal heavyweights Joe Shector and Chick Thorssen, who

¹⁴¹ Wearing, op.cit., p.126.

took up Strom's offer of membership.¹⁴² At the same time Liberal advertiser Gordon Reid took half of the Social Credit advertising account. When his clandestine negotiations were made public, Lowery was forced to resign. Alberta Liberals like Mel Hurtig pointed out loudly that there was a difference between Social Credit and Liberalism.¹⁴³

While this internal dispute was waged in Alberta, the federal party had acquired a President in 1968 who sincerely wished to alter party structure by giving more power to the grassroots level. Richard Stanbury's attempts to democratize the party might have served Alberta well, had it not been for three factors. First, the party was preoccupied by its split over the Social Credit liaison debacle. Secondly, Stanbury's own reforms had to coexist with the policies of a federal Liberal government which continued to discriminate against the West. Finally, because the reforms were implemented by federal organizers, the West instantly viewed them with distrust.

The policies of the Trudeau government after 1968 did nothing to alter the perception of the Liberal federal government as one which did not understand Alberta. Some programs which might otherwise have brought benefits to the agricultural community were lessened in impact by unpopular actions such as LIFT.¹⁴⁴ Policies of bilingualism were

¹⁴² Barr, op.cit., pp. 236-7.

¹⁴³ Wearing, op.cit., p.126.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, op.cit., p.110. LIFT, or Lower Inventories For Tomorrow, was a program initiated by the Trudeau government

pursued adamantly, but the point was missed in the West. The Liberal version of national unity appeared to be more of a preoccupation with Quebec separatism.¹⁴⁵ As David Smith notes in his chronology of Liberal misfortunes in the West, none of the eight party leadership candidates at the 1968 Liberal convention had addressed western concerns.¹⁴⁶

Trudeau owed the region nothing in his forthcoming policy announcements. The result for the four Liberal MPs elected in 1968 was predictable. In 1972, Hu Harries, who had been elected by 5,846 votes in Strathcona, was defeated by Conservative Doug Roche by 10,283. Pat Mahoney, who had won in Calgary South by 756 votes in 1968, lost by 16,486. Olson lost by 5,624 in Medicine Hat, after his previous winning margin of 208. The fourth member, A.B. Sulatycky, who had won Rocky Mountain by 1,563, lost to Joe Clark by 5,012.

Stanbury had listed six tests a party would have to meet before it would be capable of fulfilling the needs of society.¹⁴⁷ It must:

1. be in continuing and effective existence;
2. be open and democratic;
3. be representative of the profile of the community;
4. be competent in the techniques of involvement;

¹⁴⁴(cont'd) early in its first term. While previous governments had subsidized surpluses of grain by paying storage costs, LIFT legislated grain surpluses out of existence by curtailing production. Farmers regarded it as a sign that the Liberals lacked confidence in the farmers' ability to make the grain system work.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.128.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.139.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp.140-2.

5. provide mechanisms for an effective, two-way flow between government and the community;
6. be made up of people whose motive is public service, not patronage.

The Alberta case fell far short of this model. In 1971, support for the party overrepresented retired, professional and unskilled workers.¹⁴⁸ It was negligible among farmers, white collar and skilled workers. The party was regarded as one dominated by lawyers looking for patronage in the guise of contracts or judgeships.¹⁴⁹ Such reward seeking did not make for whole-hearted involvement, but fluctuated erratically and tended to favour the federal arena more, where the rewards were to be gained. Federal government patronage allowed the federal party to dictate to its provincial counterpart.¹⁵⁰ This always bode ill feeling in Alberta, where the north-south clash in the province had been exacerbated in the earlier part of the century by uneven distribution of Ottawa's favours. A utopian vision, Stanbury's criteria had little chance of implementation in Alberta during his tenure as party President.

Stanbury's visions were reminiscent of efforts made by federal organizer Keith Davey only a few years earlier. He had hoped to promote a resurgence of the party in the West by using the same methods which had proven successful in Toronto--attracting young, upwardly-mobile, energetic,

¹⁴⁸ Long and Quo, op.cit., p.17.

¹⁴⁹ Anton, op.cit., pp.33-5.

¹⁵⁰ ibid., p.28.

urban, reform-minded Liberals to take key positions in principal metropolitan centres.¹⁵¹ His federal campaign committee in Alberta was regarded for what it was, a federal organ promoting federal purposes.¹⁵² Provincial Liberals interested in making gains in Alberta politics saw little use in supporting a patronage machine that worked to stifle their own efforts.

Party history in the 1970s was marked by the debate over how to confront the ever present problem of the federal connection. Other provincial Liberal parties seemed to be able to exist with their federal-provincial schizophrenia, alternating their allegiances like a chameleon.¹⁵³ But their history was not one of subservience and exploitation. Debate became loud when provincial leader Bob Russell pursued the issue with the clear intention of steering the Alberta party to a divorce from the federal party. His arguments for a split were not kept within party ranks. He utilized the press to full advantage in an article bluntly entitled "Alberta needs an independent Liberal party," appearing in the Edmonton Journal on January 14, 1970. Russell unloaded publicly what must have been the shared sentiment of many supporters:

The party power brokers, made up principally of lawyers, dominate the party executive, control the party funds, dispense federal patronage, and

¹⁵¹ Wearing, op.cit., p.121.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, p.122.

¹⁵³ Anton adopted the term schizophrenia from E.R. Black, "Federal Strains Within a Canadian Party," in Party Politics in Canada. Edited by Hugh Thorburn. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

prostitute the Liberal party in the process. Their concern for people and the issues affecting the political life of our province is minimal since they spend most of the time trying to crowd into the lineups at the political patronage trough themselves while endeavouring to maintain the pretence of giving assistance to others in return for funds with which to lubricate the party machinery.

In his attack on patronage, Russell identified the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Farm Credit Corporation, Industrial Development Bank, Veteran's Land Act, federal criminal prosecutions and court and Senate appointments as main instruments. He called for a separate provincial organization, exclaiming that the party could not carry "old party hacks, federal bag men, dispensers of federal patronage and other political parasites through a provincial election and attain any credibility with the voters."

The crisis that Russell precipitated became the focus of Gordon Anton's study of Alberta's Liberals in 1972. Anton examined the historical precedents along with Russell's arguments to deduce whether it was in the best interests of the Alberta party to form separately from the federal organization. The issue was many sided. At stake were questions concerning finance, patronage, party philosophy and support. Anton concluded his study by wholeheartedly supporting Russell's call for a split. Unfortunately for the party and Russell, he did not stick around to fulfill his plans. Beset with the problems of running the party with no full-time help and no support from Ottawa while trying to operate his own business interests, he was forced to resign.

Understanding the arguments for separating the two parties is essential for analyzing Alberta Liberalism in 1985. When it came to financing elections, the Liberal Party of the early 1970s was grossly underfunded. Future provincial leader Nick Taylor noted in 1972 that a good election would cost the party \$250,000, but it had never raised more than \$65,000 since 1955.¹⁵⁴ Finances were grouped according to three categories.¹⁵⁵ The first was the provincial campaign fund, followed by the federal campaign fund. A third fund existed for maintaining both levels of the party between elections. This third fund was controlled by the federal party, and was thus used in a way which discriminated against the provincial efforts. Money was channelled to the province via Alberta Liberal MPs. Since the chances seemed greater for the party to make gains federally, the federal organization was favoured. The less electoral success, the less financial support the party received. This was countered by the reverse logic of the provincial party, which argued that the funding should be more where the need was greater, but it fell on deaf ears. Simultaneous negotiations between Social Credit and Alberta Liberal MP Pat Mahoney, a newly appointed Minister of State, gave conclusive evidence that the federal Liberal Party had discarded Alberta, regarding it as a wasteland.

¹⁵⁴ Anton, op.cit., p.40.

¹⁵⁵ This explanation of Liberal Party financing in 1972 was provided in Anton, op.cit., p.77.

Russell's proposals were radical. He wanted a permanent organization for the Alberta Liberal Party (ALP), separate from that of the Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta (LPCA). He wanted control of patronage placed more in the hands of provincial Liberals and dispensed less directly from Ottawa, even to the point where much of its dispensation would be from the constituency and poll captain levels. Anton supported the reforms, deciding that a visible split from the federal party was a must, given the nature of Alberta society and politics and the impossibility of the party gaining any ground while attached to the federal party. He added that the party would need charismatic leadership.¹⁵⁶

With the formation of a separate ALP, there would come a challenge that the newly formed party would have to face. As Roger Gibbins observed in his study, Prairie Politics and Society:

In recent years the Alberta provincial Liberal party found its affiliation with the national Liberal party to be a crippling cross to bear, and in 1977 all organizational links between the provincial and national parties were severed, a step taken by the Quebec organization a decade earlier for somewhat similar reasons. Such surgery within the minds of provincial voters will be more difficult to achieve.¹⁵⁷

Confronting this problem was the chosen task of Nick Taylor, who assumed the ALP leadership in time to fight the 1975 provincial election. In that campaign Taylor managed to field forty-six candidates and increase the Liberal share of the popular vote to 5 percent from its dismal 1 percent in

¹⁵⁶ Anton, op.cit., p.76.

¹⁵⁷ Gibbins, op.cit., pp.180-1

1971. His "Alberta Option" platform called for an industrial strategy which emphasized heavier reliance upon primary industry and more controlled development of non-renewable resources.¹⁵⁸ But the new face of the ALP was not as easily seen by the voters as Taylor had hoped it would be. His party was shut out from winning seats in 1975, 1979 and 1982, while the federal party was similarly rejected in Alberta in 1974, 1979, 1980 and 1984.¹⁵⁹ The province was not yet convinced that the ALP was a viable option, nor was it yet disgruntled with the provincial Tories.

Election results show that the division of the ALP and LPCA has not yet benefitted the party. Taylor's failure to capitalize on his own separate organization has led to recent demands for his resignation. To analyze the feasibility of continuing the federal-provincial split and of sustaining Taylor's leadership, we must consider the current state of the Liberal Party in Alberta. While much has been done and tried in an effort to increase party fortunes, obviously much remains to be done.

¹⁵⁸ Long and Quo, op.cit., p.2.

¹⁵⁹ While the party generally did poor in the provincial elections of 1975, 1979 and 1982, leader Nick Taylor's performance was respectable, and increased steadily. In his contest for Calgary Glenmore in 1975, he took 25 percent of the popular vote compared to the provincial percentage of 5 percent for his party. He increased this to 32 percent in the same riding in 1979. In a 1979 byelection in Barrhead, he took 33 percent and in 1982, again in Barrhead, 34 percent. In 1982 his party received less than 2 percent of the popular vote in the province.

V. Party Organization

When Nick Taylor led his provincial Liberals out of the larger Alberta Liberal Association, he was hoping to form a provincial party that would be taken seriously by the electorate, one that could compete for power with the Tories on their own turf. Ten years later, Liberals are still trying to put one sitting member in the Alberta Legislature, and the popular vote for the party has dropped to an all time low. Taylor blames his lack of success on Lougheed and Trudeau, particularly the latter. Given the failure of the past ten years and the opportunities presenting themselves now, it is only fitting that Liberals examine the reasons why they have failed to make gains despite the radical surgery of ten years past that created two Liberal parties in Alberta. Trudeau and Lougheed have both departed. In future elections, Alberta Liberals will have to find someone else to blame for their failure to make headway. As to whether the ALP or the LPCA would prosper from a restructuring of the two parties into a unified entity, the opinions are divided, and for good reason.

LPCA members generally denounce the ALP organization, saying it lacks direction. However, objective examination of the ALP, especially in the aftermath of the April 1985 convention, shows a dynamic group of people who stand a chance to move forward, the opposite of what LPCA activists describe. For their part, some ALP members may make similar

assessments of the LPCA, but their judgment is more valid, given the cleavages that exist in the federal organization. The apparent rejuvenation of the ALP at the expense of the LPCA may be just a natural reaction to the times. As former Edmonton East Federal Constituency President Nancy Power observes, Liberals are Liberals; they have turned their attention to the provincial scene now because of the imminent provincial election.¹⁶⁰ A year ago all Liberals were paying heed to their federal leanings, given the resignation of Trudeau, the coronation of Turner and the subsequent federal election.

Talk of amalgamating the two wings of the party in Alberta does not have to be black or white. Taylor opted to discard all attachment to the federal machine. To amalgamate the two wings in the 1980s, the ALP would not have to surrender itself to the LPCA. The original architect of the ALP separation, Robert Russell, never intended it to be carried to the extreme as it was by Taylor. In the 1970s debate over the split, Russell, then party leader, favoured a plan whereby the provincial leader would be separate from the instruments of federal control.¹⁶¹ The two wings would have continued to share administrative and organizational aspects, with one office. As seen in the statements of party

¹⁶⁰This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Nancy Power, Past President, Edmonton East Federal Liberal Constituency Association, September 12, 1985, in Edmonton.

¹⁶¹This and subsequent comments were offered during an interview with Robert Russell, former leader and Past President, ALP, and former candidate in provincial and federal elections, September 11, 1985, in Edmonton.

treasurers, this would appear to be a rational arrangement. Russell says that the party would swing into a federal or provincial mode, depending on what the immediate priority was. In summary, Russell's plan would have called for strict adherence to the old constitution of the ALA, which allowed for an organization which would field candidates in both federal and provincial elections, but would allow the provincial leader autonomy. The reason why this failed to work is because of the overbearing attitude of the federal Liberal government, as chronicled in chapter 3 and 4. Sound national political parties in Canada thrive on strong provincial organizations which can hopefully form provincial governments. Having been in power for so long, the federal Liberals forgot or ignored this need. When a Liberal Prime Minister such as King or Pearson insisted that the party build at the grassroots, the command went largely ignored by regional party bosses who knew that power would be retained in spite of poor local organization.¹⁶² It has taken an upset on the scale of the 1984 federal election to make the party hierarchy reconsider this attitude. It is no accident that Liberal Party of Canada President Iona Campagnolo places grassroots organization among the priorities of her reform campaign. For long-term interests, the 1984 election disaster may be the best thing that ever happened to the Liberal Party in Canada and Alberta.

¹⁶² Reginald Whitaker, The Government Party: Organizing and Financing the Liberal Party of Canada 1930-58. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.169.

Acknowledging that a strong provincial base is desired, it remains to be seen how this should be accomplished in Alberta. A closer form of union is desired between the two entities, but it must be undertaken with power firmly centred in the province. The result must be an innovation, not a return to past days when the provincial party was a mere adjunct of the federal party, taking orders with little capability of making demands. There are indications that the party has accepted this. Turner appears to be responsive to Campagnolo's design. He has told the western caucus that he will not make any statement in the House of Commons or elsewhere that would be detrimental to a provincial leader anywhere, as long as he is informed.¹⁶³ Russell comments that this is a big change from Trudeau who, in Russell's estimation, did not understand the West or did not care. This sentiment is paraphrased by the 1985 LPCA Convention co-chairman Jay Straith, who says, "Now we have a leader who cares about the party. Before we had a leader who only cared about himself."¹⁶⁴

Along with the positive indicators there are also warning signs of potential trouble areas. Russell is concerned over the presence of an organizer in the LPCA office who is funded from Ottawa.¹⁶⁵ Ideally, he would like

¹⁶³ Turner said this to the western caucus in the presence of Robert Russell, a member of the western caucus, in 1985.

¹⁶⁴ Comments made by Jay Straith, 1985 LPCA Convention co-chairman, during a telephone interview from Calgary, January 30, 1985.

¹⁶⁵ Party organizer Bruce Davies arrived in Edmonton in early September, 1985. He is paid by the national office of the party, and takes his orders from Ottawa.

to see a provincial organizer funded by Alberta Liberals themselves. His attitude is shared by ALP President Steve Lindop, who wants to "build the ALP so that it is a strong unit, so the [federal members] will want to join us".¹⁶⁶ He is cautious to note, however, that it will remain a strong provincial organization, one that will no longer have to follow arbitrary orders from federal overseers. ALP Treasurer René Paquin adds that union would be a good idea. "The best thing for the [LPCA] would be for those guys to come over here and join us".¹⁶⁷ Many LPCA members agree that an amalgamation would promote the interests of all. Their prime concern is with the current provincial leader, Nick Taylor, and their desire not to be affiliated with him. While Trudeau may have been an albatross around Taylor's neck for ten years, Taylor would serve the same role for a reunited Liberal Party in Alberta, according to many LPCA members. Considering this, it would be in the best interests of all if Taylor were removed as leader. But it would serve no purpose to remove him, only to amalgamate the parties into a unit that became the tool of a regional party boss such as Lloyd Axworthy, and was controlled by his hacks. If the amalgamation scenario is to unfold at all, Liberals must ensure the end product provides a solid base upon which to

¹⁶⁶ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Steve Lindop, President, ALP and candidate, Sherwood Park Provincial Liberal Constituency Association, September 5, 1985, in Sherwood Park.

¹⁶⁷ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with René Paquin, Treasurer, ALP, September 5, 1985, in Edmonton.

build a future and is not a return to old methods that have proven useless.

Much depends on the ability of federal leader John Turner to emerge as the leader of a truly new party. He has often been criticized as being too closely attached to the pre-Trudeau era in his methodology and attitudes.¹⁶⁸ Long-time Alberta Liberal activist John Day sees little hope in Turner being the man to build a grassroots organization while foregoing the traditional regional boss methods he was weaned on in his formative years in the Liberal Party.¹⁶⁹ He does not believe Turner will be able to overcome "an image of having regressed into the 1950s, like Joe Clark was unable to overcome the image of being a boy doing a man's job." According to Day, voting patterns among delegates at the 1984 Liberal Leadership Convention lend support to his fears that Turner is not the man to build a grassroots party. Of the voting delegates at the convention, 60 percent voted for Jean Chretien and Don Johnston on the third ballot, whereas 75 percent of the ex-officio delegates voted for Turner. Since ex-officio delegates heavily represent the party hierarchy, Day's fears become warranted. If his defeat at the polls has converted John Turner into a born-again

¹⁶⁸ See Christina McCall-Newman, Grits: An Intimate Portrait of the Liberal Party. (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1982), pp. 307-8.

¹⁶⁹ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with John Day, President, Glenora Provincial Liberal Constituency Association, 1969-71, 1973; candidate, Edmonton Belmont 1975; Regional Vice-President, ALP, 1974-76; September 11, 1985, in Edmonton. Day's quoting of statistics concerning the 1984 Liberal Leadership Convention is in reference to a study conducted by Joseph Wearing.

believer in grassroots organization, then he and his party will both be better off for it. Alberta's Liberals must be sure this has occurred before they dump Nick Taylor and forge a new provincially-based Liberal Party.

Whether or not they are able to alter their structure to form a more rational provincial party, Alberta's Liberals will still have to sell themselves to an electorate which gave them 1.8 percent of the popular vote in 1982. The onus for this marketing will, in all likelihood, fall on the ALP alone, since no merger appears imminent.

Putting the question of amalgamation aside, there are other concerns about organization that the party must address. A common complaint voiced by Liberals is that the party has no identity in the province. Few people know what it means to be a Liberal. Past ALP leader Robert Russell sees no reason why young people should want to join the party at this time, as it has nothing of interest to offer. Edmonton Strathcona Federal Liberal Constituency President Barry Cavanagh would like to see people educated about the principles of Liberalism, and says it must be done at the local level.¹⁷⁰ It is his belief that people would want to identify with and support a party or group that espouses the ideals of liberal democracy openly. He is dismayed by what he calls opportunists on the party's executive board, those

¹⁷⁰ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Barry Cavanagh, President, Edmonton Strathcona Federal Liberal Constituency Association, September 3, 1985, in Edmonton.

that would subvert Liberal ideals in order to appear more like the provincial Tories. Cavanagh would have the party remain true to its philosophical roots, and would like to see public forums in which prominent Liberals discussed their reason for being Liberals.

ALP Secretary Jean Hodgkinson says "it will take a lot of doorknockers to get out and let the people know we aren't afraid to be recognized as Liberals...also, a lot of youth must be brought in, something the Tories are lacking".¹⁷¹ Edmonton Meadowlark Candidate Grant Mitchell has done just that. He has visited 30 percent of his constituency, making himself known, and finding out who his people are. In terms of drawing youth into the party organization, the door-to-door activities of party representatives like Mitchell are probably its best endorsement. Enthusiastic himself about the party and the opportunity present before it, his enthusiasm cannot help but rub off on some of those he comes in contact with. Mitchell observes that "it's a great time to be alive for someone in their twenties, thirties or forties," given the political opportunities.¹⁷²

Apart from the recruiting of young members, other aspects of organization need attention. Gertie Ragan is in a position to assess many of the party's shortcomings, having

¹⁷¹ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Jean Hodgkinson, Secretary, ALP, September 6, 1985, in Edmonton.

¹⁷² This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Grant Mitchell, candidate, Edmonton Meadowlark Provincial Liberal Constituency Association, September 17, 1985, in Edmonton.

been an active Liberal from the days of Mackenzie King. Most notably, she served as President of the Alberta Women's Liberal Association from 1957-59, and as Vice-President of the National Women's Liberal Association from 1959-61. She saw Liberal party organization and activity peak in King's day, only to crumble during St. Laurent's era.¹⁷³ As noted in previous chapters, this is the era in which much federal-provincial bickering kept a resurging provincial party from holding on to its substantial gains under the guidance of Harper Prowse. It also supports the Whitaker observations that years in power made the federal party complacent about provincial grassroots organization. Ragan remembers when the party used to groom candidates in the municipal political arenas via school board and aldermanic contests. Then, when the trustee or alderman had become known to the public, he or she became a candidate for the legislature or Parliament. The practice is no longer the norm, Ragan admits disparagingly. Her own methods of participation are worthy of remembrance by party planners attempting to make gains in the 1980s. She was a tireless worker in the old school of community-oriented politics that incorporated all levels of jurisdiction. In one instance, Ragan spearheaded a neighbourhood collection of one dollar from each house during the depression. The proceeds provided

¹⁷³ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Gertie Ragan, former President, Alberta Women's Liberal Association, 1957-59; former Vice-President, National Women's Liberal Association, 1959-61, September 11, 1985, in Edmonton.

two hours of free skating for the area children every day. This community orientation to politics has given way to a media-enhanced focus on the macro-political scene, but it serves as a bit of history that may be worth studying and then applying to a modern perspective.

The recent nomination of former Edmonton Alderman Bettie Hewes as the Liberal candidate in Edmonton Goldbar may be evidence that the ALP has studied the past in an effort to plan for the future.¹⁷⁴ Hewes' candidacy gives much credibility to the ALP and its other candidates. In the forthcoming provincial election, ALP President Steve Lindop wants to field a candidate in each of the eighty-three constituencies. However, he wisely plans to target fifteen ridings where he knows support to be the strongest. The full slate of candidates will do much to boost the party's image as a viable alternative. At the same time, Lindop's priorities demonstrate an appreciation for the realities involved in denting the Tory battleship, a process which will begin in the next election and be continued in the subsequent one a few years down the road.

If the party is to move ahead, it must make good on its desires to work, organize and educate at the most local levels. All Liberals seem to agree that the main priority is to organize. The party can learn much from the methods of Aberhart and Lougheed, men who first organized, and then

¹⁷⁴ Hewes herself is well aware of the past shortcomings of the party. Speaking on the CBC Radio show "Edmonton PM", October 11, 1985, she noted that "in the past we didn't market our alternative very well".

worked to speak on behalf of the province.

VI. Financing Alberta Liberals in the 1980s

Discussions of party finances can be complicated. There are pools of money at the constituency, provincial and national levels of the party, and various ways employed by each level to raise their respective funds. There are also laws governing the amounts that may be raised, how money may be transferred from one level of organization to another, and how the money must be accounted for. The history of the Liberal Party in Alberta as described in the first part of this thesis demonstrates that antagonism has existed between the national and provincial wings of the party from the beginning. As in an ailing marriage, it is not surprising that a major cause of friction has been money. To understand the financial situation of the ALP and the LPCA, it is necessary to examine the state of each treasury separately, and examine the laws that govern political party finances in Alberta.

A complaint often voiced in the past by federal Liberals in Alberta has been that the national office of the party has always demanded too much of the money raised in the province in comparison to the amount the same office returns to Alberta's Liberals at election time. National Liberal Federation President Iona Campagnolo wants to see a decentralization of the party in organization and policy, but a centralizing of control.¹⁷⁵ This requirement is

¹⁷⁵ Campagnolo outlined her proposals for reform at the

fundamental if the party hopes to make gains at the polls following the 1984 loss. All federal Liberals agree that organization of the party from the ground up is necessary, and with this goes the acceptance that funds will have to be spent by the national office to build a sound organization. Just how much of the provincial coffers should have to be forwarded to Ottawa is a negotiable item. Currently 10 percent of all donations receipted by the LPCA are forwarded. The national office would like that raised to 25 percent, but the LPCA is, thus far, holding firm against any increase in the percentage. According to LPCA Treasurer Henry Ewasechko, it costs approximately \$10,000 a month to run the LPCA, the vast majority of this being gobbled up in the routine of maintaining a downtown Edmonton Office. After covering the cost of renting the somewhat cozy rooms in Jasper Avenue's Principal Plaza, the salaries for the full-time secretarial/organizational staff and regular (or irregular) mailouts to members, there is little left for schemes that may be sparked by the initiative of the party's officers. As Ewasechko describes it, "the situation is a hand-to-mouth existence".¹⁷⁶ While he agrees with Campagnolo that the national office must be strong and requires funds to build, he is also aware of the costs incurred by the LPCA

¹⁷⁵(cont'd) February 1985 convention of the LPCA in Calgary. These proposals were stated during her opening address to the convention February 22, 1985.

¹⁷⁶ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Henry Ewasechko, Treasurer, LPCA and Treasurer, Edmonton South Federal Liberal Constituency Association, September 4, 1985, in Edmonton.

machine in making ends meet, let alone skimming off funds needed in Alberta to send off to Ottawa.

The cost of maintaining the party superstructure is only one aspect of the LPCA financial picture, and probably the one least likely to cause any tension between the national office and its provincial counterpart. A much more volatile arrangement is the method of distributing funds during federal elections. Decisions are made in the national office as to how the national election kitty is to be distributed. To the surprise of no one in the LPCA, the Alberta wing of the National Liberal Federation (NLF) gets a smaller percentage of the take than other areas of Canada, particularly eastern provinces, if shares are supposed to be proportionate to the population of the respective provinces. Most Liberals in Alberta acknowledge the fact that their province has been a political wasteland for the national party and that funds will of necessity be spent where the battles are more decisive in determining who wins the war. Elections are not won or lost in the West, but in constituencies East of the Lakehead and, more often than not, in the ridings that dot the electoral map of Metropolitan Toronto. For its efforts, the LPCA was allowed by the NLF to spend \$150,000 during the 1984 federal election. While this paltry sum may have been the cause of increased dissatisfaction between the NLF and its Alberta counterpart, the means of dispersing the funds has caused some grievances to erupt within the ranks of the LPCA.

itself. Moneys allotted to the province from the NLF are placed at the disposal of two chairpersons who decide how the funds will be divided. In recognition of the historic and modern realities of Alberta politics, one chairperson is appointed from the North of the province and the other from the South. Placement of funds is weighted in favour of constituencies where the chairpersons think the party has the best chance of making gains. Wise candidates who are intent on making a respectable showing at the polls learn to depend on their own resources as much as possible, and do not count on receiving any of the money from Ottawa.

Defeated Edmonton South Liberal candidate Ken Munro is one such candidate who has collected his campaign funds on his own. Interestingly enough, his constituency Treasurer is Henry Ewasechko, the man who would know as well as anyone that candidates cannot depend on receiving funds allotted from the NLF. In keeping with his preference to go it alone in financing his campaigns, Munro also praises the efforts the LPCA has undertaken to make such grassroots financing more attractive.¹⁷⁷ The Liberal Automatic Monthly Payment Plan (LAMP) was designed to make contributing to the party a more attractive option for members who previously would not have been willing financial supporters.¹⁷⁸ Such schemes have

¹⁷⁷ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Ken Munro, President and candidate, Edmonton South Federal Liberal Constituency Association, September 4, 1985.

¹⁷⁸ LAMP allows a member of the LPCA to write a cheque against his account for an amount previously specified on dates previously specified. Cheques can be authorized twice yearly, quarterly, bi-monthly or monthly. Membership in the

been commonplace in the Progressive Conservative Party and have been ignored by the Liberals. Apart from showing evidence of poor organizational skills at all levels, the lack of such schemes also further demonstrates the complacency that plagued the party as a result of its years in government.

While candidates such as Munro take it upon themselves to raise funds rather than wait for arbitrary handouts, the fact remains that election gains may elude the party unless more money is made available. The 1984 campaign in Edmonton South cost \$34,000 and Munro describes the sum as more than enough for what was done. The question is, how much more could have been done with more funds, up to a limit allowed by election expenses legislation? Munro would like to have seen television and other forms of electronic media used more extensively in the 1984 campaign in Alberta, but such tactics are the most expensive and, at the same time, the most beneficial. There is little chance that the NLF will consider allotting more to Alberta during elections than it has in the past. Especially when it will be trying to bounce back from a sweeping defeat, the national party will hardly be willing to sacrifice funds that could be used to bolster Ontario and Quebec candidates in order to appease candidates in the political wasteland of Alberta, where the chances of

 178(cont'd) LPCA is renewed automatically on January 1 of each year as long as the member's authorization is in effect. The total annual donation under this plan is acknowledged with an official receipt once a year for the purpose of claiming a tax credit.

their success are slim, and the seats few in number. The LPCA will have to pursue the grassroots fundraising approach adamantly. There is no other viable option open to it. It would appear that the party members themselves realize this. At the very base level of organization, the constituency association, membership fees will be raised from five dollars to ten dollars in January, 1986. While the previous arrangement was that \$1.50 of the individual member's fee stayed in the constituency and the remaining \$3.50 went to the LPCA office, the new arrangement will have five dollars stay in the constituency and five dollars go to the Edmonton office. Both levels will prosper from the arrangement. The most apparent benefit, however, is the amount of money that stays in the constituency, allowing for more control of funds at the grassroots level. Apart from such innovations, the party will have to take full advantage of the laws governing contributions to political parties which other parties have been so quick to capitalize on. All other things being equal, financial strength determines the success of political ventures. The LPCA can expect to make no significant and long lasting gains unless it aggressively pursues fund raising at the grassroots level by introducing attractive schemes for would-be contributors, the LAMP initiative being a good pacesetter.

If the need for grassroots fundraising is a must for the LPCA, it is equally necessary for the ALP. While some support is offered to the LPCA from the national office

during a federal election, no such assistance is available to the ALP.¹⁷⁹ The tax credit scheme could assist the provincial party even better than the federal party. Whereas a donor is allowed a tax credit of 75 percent for the first \$100 contributed to a federal party, the credit allowed for provincial party donations is 75 percent for the first \$150. ALP Treasurer René Paquin is aware of the ignorance of party members about the opportunities the tax credit scheme presents, noting that no money comes into the party's coffers between elections from the grassroots level.¹⁸⁰ While a campaign can be run for as little as \$7,000 in any constituency, according to Paquin, he says a real contest would require as much as the election laws would allow in any one constituency. A scan of the list of contributions to the ALP in excess of \$375 reveals much, especially when compared to similar lists of the NDP and the PCs. The largest single donation to the ALP came from party leader Nick Taylor's own company, Lochiel Exploration Ltd., and amounted to \$4,900. Taylor contributed another \$1,800 himself under his own name, bringing his personal contributions up to an amount that accounts for about 13 percent of all donations to the party over \$375. The next largest contributors were the Royal Bank and the Bank of Montreal, each with \$3,000 on the list. Both banks, interestingly, are the only two that donate an equal amount

¹⁷⁹ It is illegal to utilize federal party funds for provincial elections on a large scale.

¹⁸⁰ interview with René Paquin, op.cit.

of money to both the ALP and the provincial Tories. The Toronto Dominion Bank and Scotiabank can also be found on the ALP lists, but have spots on the PC list showing contributions of up to twice as much as they deemed adequate to give to the Liberals. While the names of some corporations on the ALP list may look impressive, the truth of the relative significance is made evident when amounts are contrasted with the Tory list. The latter spills across 105 pages of computer printout and has individual donors such as Transalta Utilities Corporation giving a sum of \$11,000. The ALP lists recapture some measure of esteem when contrasted to the NDP scrolls, which list no corporate donations, and only small sums from two unions.

The ALP falls far short of the mark it could reach in collecting both corporate and grassroots donations. The Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act is far from restrictive. It stipulates that in any calendar year a registered party may accept contributions which shall not exceed \$15,000 in aggregate from any person, corporation, trade union or employee organization. In any campaign year, \$30,000 may be contributed to each registered party less any amount contributed already in that calendar year. Again, the Conservatives have taken advantage of this and amassed \$1.3 million in cash donations in 1984, with assets of \$931,000 being declared.¹⁸¹ In comparison, the ALP scrambled to cut

¹⁸¹ Figures listed for all parties are taken from statements filed with the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta for the year 1984.

their deficit by \$35,027, pay off a chunk of its \$168,595 bank loan and finally declare assets of \$56,580 (although still overshadowed by a \$133,595 outstanding loan).

While the accounts of the ALP look dismal, they are improving. Before Paquin took on the role of Treasurer, the debt amounted to \$240,000 and has been whittled away bit by bit in the last couple of years. Still, debt management is remedial and will not work to bolster accounts for future elections which the rejuvenating party hopes to win. The party requires bagmen who can solicit funds to the extent the generous Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act allows for. The September 1985 issue of the ALP newsletter carried an advertisement for the LAMP program, describing it as an ALP initiative.¹⁸² The ad raised the back of the LPCA which had not given clear permission to borrow the scheme for ALP purposes. While the bold move may have been misguided, the intent was correct. Such fundraising schemes will have to be undertaken by the ALP under its own banner, whether it be a version of LAMP or an original creation.

There are also lessons to be learned from the experience of federal Liberal candidates. Financial support on a large scale from the provincial office will not be forthcoming. Should the party be able to tap into large donations, the funds will have to be used on a province-wide basis, concentrating on the party leader who is attempting

¹⁸² Alberta Liberal Party, The Alberta Liberal, August 1985, p. 4.

to become Premier. The approach is not unfair to candidates in the provincial constituencies, but reasonable. Candidates will have to find their own resources. The acceptance of this fact will lead to less squabbling over pennies between the constituency and provincial levels of the ALP organization. It will allow candidates to get on with the task of getting themselves elected. It will free the provincial organization of any commitment, real or imagined, to assist in the local contests with financial support. The end result will be a goal-directed party getting on with the business at hand.

Having candidates assume greater responsibility for their own financing will make for less control from Ottawa, having placed the onus for fund raising at the grassroots level. The success of this scenario will depend on another variable, discussed in the previous chapter--the ability to organize at the grassroots level. The presence of a sound organization will be crucial to the success of any fundraising venture.

VII. Policy Platforms and Process

An examination of Liberal Party policies must be done as two separate studies. Policies formulated by the ALP cannot be adhered to by the LPCA because of the different jurisdictions each is competing in, and vice-versa. Thus, each will be discussed separately. Before plunging into the specifics of party policy, however, some time must be devoted to discovering what Liberals consider to be their philosophical foundations upon which the more specific areas of policy rest.

A. Philosophical Orientations of Alberta Liberals

All active Liberals in Alberta, whether attached more to ALP or LPCA functions, appear to share a similar philosophical orientation, lending credence to the old maxim that "a Liberal is a Liberal", no matter what jurisdiction he lives in. All Liberals view their party as one that fills the middle of the political spectrum. They see it as a party committed to maintaining a market-oriented economy where individuals are able to pursue their own initiatives to the best of their ability, but are always careful to note that it is a party which accepts as equally important the protection of those who do not have the ability to compete. While these are the basic tenets held dear by all Liberals, they are best expressed by Edmonton Strathcona Federal

Constituency President Barry Cavanagh.¹⁸³ He identifies Liberalism through constant reference to the principles of liberal democracy. Cavanagh refers to the need for a "social safety net" that protects people from the consequences of capitalism. Equality of opportunity is fundamental to his belief system, and he therefore praises a fair system of student loans which allows those with the ability to do so to gain an education while they have the desire. Through such means people may maximize their potential unhindered by an immediate lack of money. Hand in hand with this, Cavanagh supports government monopolies and control in areas of essential service such as hydro, gas and telephone services, and denounces extra-billing in medicare. He is a supporter of Petro-Canada, careful to note that his support of the national oil company is not given in the hopes of stifling the big private companies, but for the measure of control Petro-Canada exerts in a market that must be controlled to secure the future petroleum needs of all Canadians.

Cavanagh admits that he belongs to the left wing of the party, a position that puts him at odds with most members of the party's executive board, in his estimation. He disagrees with board members who insinuate that the Liberal Party should attempt to masquerade as Tories. Although a member of the ALP, Cavanagh's priorities are with the federal wing, and he remains critical of the provincial party and its leader, Nick Taylor. In Cavanagh's estimation, Taylor places

¹⁸³ interview with Barry Cavanagh, cited previously.

too much emphasis on oil and not enough on social policy. Recently Taylor has made a point of focusing on agricultural issues, hoping to capitalize on an area many believe has been ignored by the provincial government. Edmonton South Federal Constituency President Ken Munro disagrees with Cavanagh to an extent, saying Taylor has been more concerned with rural issues in the past than he has been given credit for, but his philosophical base parallels that of his cohort in Edmonton Strathcona, as do the bases of Liberals generally. Munro says a Liberal must let people know that effort brings reward in the private sector, but agrees that all individuals in society must be protected.¹⁸⁴ His Treasurer, Henry Ewasechko, explains the middle ground held by the Liberals differently.¹⁸⁵ In his view, the Liberals can swing to accommodate any need at any time, and cannot be identified as a party locked into a particular stance for eternity. Another Liberal who is primarily involved with the federal wing of the party, Ewasechko helps shed light on the question of why an Albertan should decide to become a Liberal, in light of the history of the party in the province. Ewasechko has been a westerner all of his life, and being a Liberal simultaneously has never been a perplexing situation for him. In his estimation, problems in the relationship between Eastern and Western Canada have been overstated by Western Canadians. Ewasechko would rather take a positive stance and look at the implications of

¹⁸⁴ interview with Ken Munro, previously cited.

¹⁸⁵ interview with Henry Ewasechko, previously cited.

electing a Liberal government for Canada than harp about how the West has suffered at the hands of the East. Not all federal Liberals in Alberta are united on this issue. Edmonton East (federal) Liberal candidate Al Iafolla blames the eastern element of the party for much of the failure experienced by Alberta's federal Liberals over the years, a perception that is substantiated by the history of the party in Alberta as discussed in earlier chapters.¹⁸⁶ He challenges the party to become one not only capable of accommodating left and right but also East and West.

A strong belief in the need to secure the welfare of all Canadians is echoed throughout the individual statements made by Liberals. It is reflected not only in the descriptions of Liberal philosophy, but in what the Liberals see as being wrong with the Conservatives. For Ewasechko, the Tories are at fault for their lack of concern for education and medicare extra-billing, while being too blindly attuned to the needs of big business. In the estimation of Barry Cavanagh, it is because the ALP and its leader have been too close to the provincial Tories in their policy pronouncements that he has been reluctant to identify himself with the provincial party.

As to the direction Liberal party philosophy should be taking in the future, Liberals are again united in their

¹⁸⁶This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Al Iafolla, Candidate, Edmonton East Federal Liberal Constituency Association and prospective Candidate, Edmonton Calder Provincial Liberal Constituency Association, October 5, 1985, in Edmonton.

perceptions, at least when speaking in a general sense. Al Iafolla sees the need for a platform that emphasizes what he calls "fiscal populism". Citing the example set by New York Governor Mario Cuomo, Iafolla notes that the Liberals must present themselves as a party capable of governing in a way that is fiscally sound and responsible, yet attuned to the needs of the people in a liberal democratic state. His strategy is directed at both levels of government, but is more a criticism of the provincial wing. Munro also sees the populist approach as being the key to ALP success. An historian, he notes that Albertans have successively given their overwhelming support to a party that presented itself as a populist movement capable of competent administration. Cavanagh adds that it was in the West that Fabian socialism had its origins in Canada. Given these perceptions from active Liberals, it would appear that they have an accurate understanding of what it takes to get elected in Alberta: a party that can make itself to appear to be as much of a populist party as Lougheed's Tories managed to make themselves appear in the new urban Alberta.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷The truly populist parties in Alberta's history have been the UFA and Social Credit. By the time Lougheed's Tories were competing for power, urbanization had eliminated the rural climate that was the breeding ground of such movements. In the new urban Alberta, the Conservatives were as close to resembling a populist party as a party might be able to get.

B. LPCA Policy

Specific policy statements of the LPCA also reflect this middle of the road orientation espoused by the party officers quoted. This becomes evident when one examines the policy resolutions discussed at the LPCA Convention held in Calgary in February of 1985. In a policy workshop entitled "Universality: Recommitment or Re-examination", the title of which left the subject open to revision if members so desired, resolutions were passed to ensure the continuation of universality in all areas of social programming introduced by previous Liberal federal governments. In particular there was the following resolution, proposed by the Calgary North Federal Liberal Association:

WHEREAS education, health care, and other social services provide both a better trained and conditioned workforce and a more satisfied population, contributing to both a high level of investment in human resources has proven itself in the postwar era to be necessary for long-term social and economic progress,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Liberal Party of Canada defend adequate funding of social services, to be defended not as charity but as socially and economically necessary investments in people, and uphold the principle of universality as fundamental to maintaining the quality of services, and keeping faith with those now or soon to become dependent upon social programs.¹⁸⁸

Although there was healthy discussion, the resolution was passed with little serious opposition. Similar resolutions had been proposed by the Calgary Women's Liberal Policy Association, the Calgary Women's Liberal Club, and the

¹⁸⁸ Resolution 3.1, proposed by the Calgary North Federal Liberal Association as it appeared in the handbook for delegates to the 1985 LPCA Convention.

Edmonton South Constituency Association, all of which became redundant with the passing of the Calgary North resolution and were subsequently not debated. The widespread concern for the issue was apparent from the number of resolutions proposed and the obvious support for the original resolution, demonstrating the commitment federal Liberals have (even in Alberta) to social programs created by past federal Liberal governments. At the same time, resolutions were passed calling for long-term employment strategies, as well as national industrial strategies that allow for government intervention.¹⁸⁹

Other vigorously supported policy resolutions were: equality in the workplace; maternity leave; inclusion of basic dental services in the medicare system; preservation of the CBC as a crown corporation; critical study of the merits of pursuing free trade; decentralization and accessibility of the bureaucracy; environmental protection; and Canadianization of the oil industry, among others. Resolutions passed do not become Liberal Party of Canada policy, but are forwarded to the national party's policy level for consideration. They must, however, be considered as an accurate presentation of what Alberta's federal Liberal Party members deem to be important.

¹⁸⁹ See resolutions 3.5 and 3.6, both presented by the Calgary North Federal Liberal Association in the February 1985 LPCA Convention delegate's handbook.

C. ALP Policy

As mentioned previously, members of the ALP share with their federal counterparts basic philosophical orientations. There are some differences between the two parties in emphasis. Alberta Liberals talk more about the need to make a society where individuals may thrive in the marketplace, and less about state-provided security, although not to the point of excluding the latter. Former ALP leader Robert Russell states this outright when he says that the identity of a Liberal in Alberta can vary somewhat with the times, and may even be a little right of centre.¹⁹⁰ Russell's priorities in terms of issues that should be pursued include the Canadian Commercial Bank bailout and questions concerning the environment, such as the use of a Swan Hills storage area for PCBs.

Others in the party focus more on the economic priorities. Party President Steve Lindop labels the Tories as an elitist party, and the NDP as socialists, leaving the Liberals as the only party that will ensure that competition is available for all.¹⁹¹ Because of their desire to preserve elites, the Tories stifle individuals who might otherwise make gains, according to Lindop. The NDP, on the other hand, force all individuals to surrender to the collective. Lindop's concern for the individual is shared by ALP Policy

¹⁹⁰ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Robert Russell, Past President, former leader and former candidate in federal and provincial elections, September 11, 1985, in Edmonton.

¹⁹¹ interview with Steve Lindop, previously cited.

Co-ordinator Martin Kratz. Identifying himself as a strong individualist, Kratz joined the party because he sees it as the only one which will allow individuals and creativity to flourish in a market oriented economy.¹⁹² But, while allowing for maximum freedom for individuals to pursue different avenues of human achievement, Kratz is also aware that some people have disadvantages, and that they too must be given a measure of security.

The concern for security of all people is best summed up by Edmonton Meadowlark Liberal candidate Grant Mitchell. For him, being a Liberal means one is positive about people.¹⁹³ He dislikes what he refers to as the negativism of the Tories, evident to Mitchell in the way they blame unemployment and other social ills on the man in the street. Mitchell would allow for government involvement in business, but not to the extent that entrepreneurs are pushed out. The people-mindedness of Liberalism is restated by ALP Treasurer René Paquin who, along with Mitchell, observes that the Alberta Tories have moved into what is traditionally the Liberal area.¹⁹⁴ More recently, Liberals are attempting to show Tories have moved to the right. The resulting gap in the middle is the one the ALP must fill if it hopes to make gains. There may be some difficulties with this if observations made by ALP Secretary Jean Hodgkinson hold

¹⁹² This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Martin Kratz, Policy Co-ordinator, ALP; September 18, 1985, in Edmonton.

¹⁹³ interview with Grant Mitchell, previously cited.

¹⁹⁴ interview with René Paquin, previously cited.

true. In her estimation, the Calgary group in the party is much more concerned with promoting the interests of big business.¹⁹⁵ Historically the party has always experienced a north-south rift as documented in previous chapters, and Hodgkinson is identifying one aspect of its current manifestation. She would see the party concern itself with women's issues, hospitals and other health-related issues, but also maintain a vibrant dialogue about the future of the oil industry. In her analysis, the only people who have prospered under Tory rule or who will continue to support the Tories are "the rich, the well-heeled and those with [the right] socio-political connections." The fact that a food bank exists in Edmonton that is stocked predominantly by the middle class is her proof that ~~the~~ current provincial government is not attuned to social concerns. Her observations drive home the point that, if the Liberals hope to capture votes in the province, many of those votes will have to be taken from the PCs, considering both the sheer numbers needed and the apparent gap she says has been created that "leaves a lot of red Tories with no place to go."

Alberta's Liberals think that the current political climate is ripe for them to make gains, if they take advantage of the moment. Whether or not the party stands to gain as a party of the centre is questionable. As Hodgkinson notes, the Calgary faction of the ALP tends to be more

¹⁹⁵ interview with Jean Hodgkinson, previously cited.

right-wing than the Edmonton faction. This is an accurate reflection of the province itself. Southern Alberta will want two concerns addressed by any party hoping to become the government. First, the burgeoning business interests of Calgary will want a government that will allow Albertans to continue to capitalize on the province's resource wealth, as well as safeguard the future by promoting, for example, resource processing industries. Secondly, agricultural concerns must be given attention. These pressures will be different than pressures exerted from Northern Alberta. In the latter, communities that have been drawn into the mainstream of provincial life will demand adequate social services to deal with the problems brought on by industrialization. One of the most frequently criticized provincial government departments is the Department of Social Services, and cases that exposed their poor handling by the department are often from the North of the province. On top of these two opposing pressures, parties will also have to address the grievances of farmers. Support for right- and left-wing parties may be polarized on this north-south provincial axis. While this polarization is fraught with danger for a centre party, it also affords opportunities. The party of the centre may be in the best position to make gains by addressing the concerns of both competing sides of the spectrum. This is something the Liberal Party will have to attempt to do. The middle ground they profess to hold may have to be very broad indeed. The

party's specific policy statements will have to balance all factors competing for attention.

D. The ALP Policy Process

The development of specific policy proposals is the responsibility of Policy Co-ordinator Kratz. Previous to 1985, no useful mechanism was in place for devising policy. Kratz has implemented a three-phase program for policy development. The first phase of this mechanism is "strategic policy development". This encompasses what Kratz refers to as "long term reconstruction of political policy vehicles". It is an ongoing process that utilizes task forces dealing with specific areas of interest that closely parallel departments of the provincial government. This first phase allows for "structural openness", an elaborate synonym for what is best translated as input from as many interested people at the grassroots level as possible. Formalities of scheduled meetings are done away with and input via telephone is offered from those Kratz solicits ideas from, or others who wish to make their unsolicited contribution. The second phase is "tactical policy development", or issue management. This stage of the process is described by Kratz as being more negative than the first, in that it analyzes current government policy and reacts to it. It is followed by the third phase, or the "synthesis", which generates positive solutions from the input provided by the first two phases. Kratz's idioms aside, the policy process, simply

stated, involves collecting policy initiatives from members, noting what is wrong with current government policy, and combining the two into a final presentable package to be marketed to the electorate. A fourth phase would provide policy support to Liberal MLAs.

There are two meritorious observations to be made about Kratz's approach. First, there is a semblance of structure. Kratz wants a structure which will survive after he leaves. As he notes, Liberals "must create substance, not be just a flash-in-the-pan...we're building a new party." Secondly, the approach has the potential to be less elitist than in the past, considering the number of people that could be involved. Constituency associations, previously left out of the policy formulation process, are encouraged to provide input. Kratz praises his own system because, in his eyes, it allows him and others to use their imaginations. He is critical of the federal party which, to him, has been dominated by strategic planners who have been locked into certain patterns of thought and a narrow range of reactions to situations. His structure as he defends it is no bureaucratic system which rejects someone who is not ideologically pure, but one which will listen to anybody. Advertisements are carried in the party's newspaper soliciting input from interested members. What is done with suggestions received from such solicitations is uncertain, however. A truly participatory policy process would not only encourage, but actively seek out suggestions. To do so

adequately, the process must be publicized. Greater efforts must be made to make it visible. While it has the potential to be participatory, the process remains too closed. Kratz serves as the liaison between the process and the party's Executive Board, which offers criticism and ultimately decides which policy suggestions become party policy. As to the direction policy should be taking, Kratz notes that, to win an election, Alberta Liberals will have to take a part of the NDP vote, as well as votes from disenchanted Conservatives who want a fresh alternative. Clearly, a middle-of-the-road approach would be the direction in which Kratz hopes the party is steering.

A first test of his less-than-a-year old process was the party campaign college held in Edmonton September 21, 1985. At this closed meeting prospective candidates and key campaign workers were exposed to "Alberta Liberal Party Policy Positions for the 1985-1986 Provincial Election in Alberta, Phase 1", submitted by Policy Co-ordinator Kratz and dated September 17, 1985. A preamble to the thirty-two-page restricted circulation document emphasized the need to ensure that individuals can pursue their lives with little interference. This was followed by general statements on various subjects that corresponded to government ministries, as well as other areas which have been ignored by the provincial government, in the minds of Liberals. Some criticism was directed at the document for being too right wing and not moving far enough away from the

current Tory policies. This criticism will have to be addressed, as large segments of Alberta's population (i.e. the North) will be looking for more emphasis on social issues than the current government has been willing to give. The document is a start, a statement with which to build. The fact that a mechanism exists that allowed for this stage to be reached and will allow for further revision is commendable. It appears that, in a general sense, Alberta Liberals have a sense of what concerns they will have to address in their policy statements if they are to make political gains. Wise and expedient policy can be devised only if the party has a realistic understanding of the past and current social circumstances of the province, and can expose the limits of the current government in responding to those circumstances, an issue to which we now turn our attention.

E. Policy in the Context of Modern Alberta

The changes which occurred in Alberta's social structure after the oil boom have been well documented by Richards and Pratt, and have been cited in chapter 4 of this thesis. They describe the growth of an entrepreneurial class, one that "learned to use the provincial government to capture resource rents and bargain for linked industrial developments".¹⁹⁶ They see this as beneficial, in that it can lead to a reduction in the power of international

¹⁹⁶ Richards and Pratt, *op.cit.*, p.11.

capital and a reversal of Alberta's original dependency relationship. While the Tories have been successful in the eyes of the new bourgeoisie, they have become limited in their plans for the future. The new elite may have become wealthy, but it is not certain they will remain secure in their newfound wealth or that Albertans in general will stand to gain much in the future.

Lougheed grasped the moment in 1971 when the province required a right-of-centre populist leader. As Richards and Pratt note, "populism, in both its left and right variants, involved strategies by those 'at the bottom' to use the state to their advantage."¹⁹⁷ In the 1970s this was translated into province building: securing control over the development of Alberta's resources so that Albertans prospered now and in the future. It also involved addressing the age-old question of eastern exploitation head-on. Those 'at the bottom' were all Albertans who stood to lose should the province not be able to direct its own economy.

In 1971, the right wing variant of populism may have had more appeal. Edmonton West Liberal Candidate Michael MacDonald has observed that the pendulum of political moods in Alberta swings from left to right and back again.¹⁹⁸ MacDonald speculates that the pendulum has swung as far right as it is going to go and it is time for a swing in the

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p.38.

¹⁹⁸ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with Michael MacDonald, candidate, Edmonton West Federal Liberal Constituency Association, September 5, 1985, in Edmonton.

opposite direction. Such swings to the left have occurred in the past, but were sidetracked by incumbent Social Credit governments which took advantage of the historical federal-provincial rift. When wartime emergency measures of the 1940s made Canada a centrally planned economy, Alberta's Socreds were quick to campaign against the perils of socialism.¹⁹⁹ The result was electoral victory for the right-wing Socreds in 1944, to the detriment of the left wing that was gaining momentum outside the province, forcing positive responses from incumbent governments.

Richards and Pratt chronicle the demise of Social Credit:

Oil brought prosperity, urbanization, and the rise of a new middle class which lacked attachments or loyalties to populist concerns. Populism in Alberta was simply extinguished, swallowed up in the gaping maw of Americanization. Given this legacy, Social Credit's own fate was both inevitable and fitting.²⁰⁰

Lougheed could make himself appear as a populist in that all Albertans stood to gain by the realization of his policy statements. The complacency that arose in the new middle class of the 1960s has parallels with the new bourgeoisie of the Lougheed years. Having no new ideas to present to a new generation, and having moved to the right in an era which may be demanding a response from the left, the Tories have created a gap for another party to fill. Should the Liberals wish to fill the void, they must move in two directions.

First, they must recognize the importance of oil, the need

¹⁹⁹ Richards and Pratt, op.cit., p.81.

²⁰⁰ Richards and Pratt, op.cit., p.91.

to secure a future for Alberta in the resource industry, and the need for Alberta to exert control in this vital area.

According to Richards and Pratt:

Oil, according to [University of Alberta Professor E.H.] Shaffer's estimates, accounted for over half of the new jobs created in Alberta during the 1960s. Of his estimated 87,000 oil-related new positions, more than half were in noncommercial services (e.g. teachers and hospital employees), commercial services (e.g. lawyers and hairdressers), wholesale and retail trade. Growth of a new urban and professional labour force, much of it in the public and para-public sectors, enlarged the ranks of a new middle-class, but it also diminished the relative importance of Social Credit's rural base.²⁰¹

Secondly, Liberals must remember their own philosophical commitments and move to accommodate the people-oriented demands which tend to be neglected by a party overly concerned with promoting the interests of big business.

Should the Liberals not be able to project a platform that addresses these two concerns, other parties will surely snaffle much of the vote which stands to fall to the middle road party. Voters looking for reform in social issues could move to the NDP, a party optimistic about its expected successes in the next election. The economic concerns could be articulated by an emergent party such as The Alberta Representative Party. If the Liberal Party hopes to offset this threat, it must be able to speak on behalf of North and South, left and right, no easy task for any party. It can help overcome the difficulties of this by presenting itself as a viable alternative, one with a platform that will not just perpetuate elites, but from which all Albertans stand

²⁰¹ Richards and Pratt, op.cit., p.161.

to gain. The Tories did this in a period of rising prosperity. The Liberals need to do it for an Alberta hoping to guarantee its future well-being. By failing to capture the broad middle ground now, the ALP would be allowing a moment to slip by that will not likely return for some time.

VIII. Party Membership

In the 1982 provincial election, the ALP claimed only 1.8 percent of the popular vote. Liberals did somewhat better in the 1984 Canadian general election, harnessing 13 percent of the vote, down from the 1980 figure of 23 percent. Support for the party has been so poor that it would be accurate to say the Liberals must increase their support in all areas. Despite the fact Liberal Party support is so small, it is useful to discover which sections of the population are featured in the membership lists. The party has not been able to increase the sheer numbers of the groups that it does gather some support from because of the ability of the governing PCs to harness such widespread support for itself. Should Conservative supporters become disenchanted with their party, it is possible to target those disenchanted as people that could be won over to the Liberal Party. In all likelihood, those that joined the Liberal ranks in such a scenario would be proportionately representative of the groups already found to be supportive of the party.

As any political party, the Liberal Party has some strong supporters who busy themselves year round with political involvement, but more numerous are those who are marginal political participants between elections.

To accommodate this difference, two surveys were used in an effort to gather information about Liberal Party supporters. One survey was distributed to 200 delegates

attending the LPCA Convention in Calgary in February, 1985.²⁰² Sixty-two of the surveys were returned at the end of the convention. This sample was used to represent the party members who are very active. Of those surveys returned, 71 percent were from officers of the party or its constituency organizations. A second survey was mailed in September 1985 to 300 LPCA members across the province.²⁰³ Survey recipients were chosen from the lists of eight of the twenty-one Alberta federal Liberal constituency associations. Two urban and two rural ridings were selected north of Red Deer, and four similar ridings were selected from the southern part of the province. LPCA lists were used because each constituency would represent an area larger than any of the ALP lists. The chance of disproportionately representing specific segments of the population was thus lessened.²⁰⁴ Survey recipients were chosen randomly from the lists. Seventy-two surveys were completed and returned. This provided a sample of the general membership of the party. Names were chosen from 1984 lists, those of an election year, which are substantially larger than those of 1985. This provided for a wider sample of card-carrying Liberals. The results of the two surveys will be presented together, drawing attention to similarities and differences between very active and nominally supportive members. About half of

²⁰² see appendix 1, Convention Survey.

²⁰³ see appendix 2, Membership Survey.

²⁰⁴ A provincial constituency list may focus too exclusively on a specific population, i.e. a university community or a particular ethnic community.

the respondents to the delegate survey were from Calgary or Edmonton, which corresponds to the population of the province, but most of those were Calgarians, a factor precipitated by the convention location. An unusually large proportion of the Edmonton delegates were from Edmonton South, a constituency association that is more active than most.

The surveys give two types of information about Liberals: (1) demographic traits, and (2) description of political activity.

Table 3
AGE OF ALBERTA LIBERALS

Age Group	Members	Delegates
under 25	13.9	14.5
25-34	19.4	19.4
35-44	16.7	12.9
45-54	16.7	17.7
55-64	15.3	22.6
65 and over	18.1	12.9

Ages of Liberals are distributed evenly, with slight overrepresentation in the 25-34 age group. This is representative of the provincial population, while the overrepresentation evident in the 65 and over age group is not; this category accounts for 18.1 percent of members, while only 7.8 percent of the provincial population can be found in this age group.²⁰⁵ Males and females are both

²⁰⁵ Alberta Bureau of Statistics, Alberta Statistical Review, Fourth Quarter 1984. February 1985.

represented proportionately, with 51.4 percent of members and 52.5 percent of delegates identified as males. In the province, 51.3 percent of the population is male.²⁰⁶

Table 4
EDUCATION LEVEL OF
ALBERTA LIBERALS

Education	Members	Delegates
less than grade 12	20.8	6.6
high school grad	33.3	32.8
some post high school	23.6	18.1
university degree	12.5	26.2
some grad study	2.8	8.2
graduate degree	7.0	8.2

Active Liberals are better educated than marginal members, as demonstrated in table 4. Of the 18.1 percent of the delegates who had gained some post-high school education, most were youth delegates and students in degree-oriented programs. Among the marginal members who had some post high school education, most had attended a community or technical college in a diploma-oriented program. It should be noted that the general members are closer than the delegates to the provincial norm for education attained.

Among occupations, the professional and managerial group is overrepresented in both member and delegate categories. This group included clergy, teachers, lawyers, academics, accountants and anyone who was in a managerial position who did not own his or her business. The business

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

Table 5
OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF
ALBERTA LIBERALS

Occupational Group	Members	Delegates
professional/managerial	22.9	46.8
tradesmen/blue collar	18.6	---
student	11.4	11.3
businessmen	7.1	8.1
clerical/secretarial	5.7	4.8
housewife	12.9	11.3
farmer	5.7	1.6
sales	---	4.8
retired	15.7	11.3

group refers to owners of businesses, small or large. Farmers are underrepresented in both groups, but their absence is particularly noticeable among delegates, considering the convention took place in February. Retired people are also overrepresented, and it should be noted that some retired members and delegates listed their former occupation as farmers. Teachers were a greatly overrepresented group. They accounted for over 25 percent of the retired and professional categories. A large number of respondents who were university students identified themselves as Bachelor of Education candidates.

Few claimed membership in a union, with 13.9 percent of members and only 6.5 percent among the delegates replying in the affirmative. Many more identified themselves as members of professional associations, the Alberta Teachers' Association being the most common. Less than 5 percent of either two categories were members of an agricultural

co-operative. Many were members of service clubs, societies and community organizations.

Table 6
ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME OF
ALBERTA LIBERALS

Income	Members	Delegates
less than \$20,000	24.3	6.7
\$20,000-30,000	20.0	20.0
\$30,000-40,000	10.0	18.3
\$40,000-50,000	22.9	15.0
\$50,000-60,000	5.7	20.0
over \$60,000	17.1	20.0

Delegates have a greater number showing higher family income and fewer showing very low family income, an indication that active party members are better off than general members.

Of the general members, 20 percent were immigrants, and only slightly fewer of the delegates had immigrated. In both categories, slightly over half had been born in Alberta. Almost 90 percent of the general members had lived in the province over ten years; the number of delegates who had was slightly smaller. This destroys the myth that claims Liberal support comes mostly from Eastern Canadians who have moved into the province in the past ten years. This finding is corroborated by the large number of retired people who are party members. Liberals appear to be long-term residents, with over 84.5 percent of the party membership stating their families also live in the province, more than 90 percent of these for over ten years.

Table 7
RESIDENCE LOCATION OF
ALBERTA LIBERALS

Place of Residence	Members	Delegates
farm	11.3	4.8
small town	14.1	3.2
city under 100,000	8.5	37.1
city over 100,000	66.2	54.8

Large city populations have more than their share of the member as well as delegate category, considering the two urban areas with populations over 100,000 account for half of Alberta's population. Among delegates, the urban proportion is greatly inflated.

Table 8
RELIGION OF ALBERTA
LIBERALS

Religion	Members	Delegates
Roman Catholic	38.5	40.4
Orthodox Catholic	1.5	0
Anglican	13.8	9.6
United Church	20.0	19.2
Lutheran	4.6	5.8
Presbyterian	1.5	5.8
other Protestant	10.8	13.5
Jewish	1.5	0
other	7.7	5.8

Catholics are overrepresented by 10 percent relative to the population of the province. All Protestant denominations are slightly underrepresented, except Anglicans, which are on an equal basis with their provincial standard. This skewing of

religious denomination is a Liberal trait everywhere in Canada and should not be considered as an Alberta phenomenon. Liberals in Alberta appear to differ very little from their counterparts elsewhere.

Table 9
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF
ALBERTA LIBERALS

Ethnicity	Members ²⁰⁷	
English	22.9	
Scottish	10.0	
Irish	8.6	(41.5 total
French	8.6	Br. Isles)
Ukrainian	11.4	
Other European	28.6	
American	1.4	
other	8.6	

In identifying their ethnic origins, Liberals identified the British Isles as being the most common place of origin. This was followed by other Europeans from West and East with Ukrainians (the largest group) listed separately. Some members who listed their origins as being French, without specifying French Canadian, were taken out of this group also, but they were small in number. Most members in the category of other Europeans identified themselves as Germans, Dutch, Scandinavian, with very minor inclusions from other European nationalities. No nationality in this category numbered as many as any of the European nationalities given a separate listing. Those identified as -----
²⁰⁷ information not available for delegates.

Americans did not elaborate on their ethnicity, and were thus listed. The "other" category included mostly Africans and Asians, with minor inclusions of South Americans. Again, no single group was represented in sufficient numbers to warrant a separate listing.

Most delegates reinforced their status as active members by identifying themselves as party officers at either the constituency or provincial level (71 percent). Only 13.2 percent of the general members claimed to hold any office in the party. The commitment to Liberalism is made evident when the longevity of memberships is examined. Among members, 41.1 percent have been card carriers for over 10 years, and another 51.8 percent have been for five to ten years. While the party holds onto the faithful, few new members are brought into the fold. Only 5.4 percent stated they had been members less than five years. Clearly two-thirds (66.7 percent) of LPCA members admit to holding memberships in the ALP. Again, only 6.4 percent of these have been taken out in the past five years. Over two-thirds of both delegates and members noted that their parents had voted Liberal, with the next frequent support given to the PCs, followed more distantly by the NDP and Social Credit. Delegates affirmed their activity level in the party by often going to meetings (94.9 percent), and over 98 percent give money to the party, 40.7 percent doing so often. Of the general members, 75 percent also attended meetings, though less frequently (10.3 percent said they went often), and

23.2 percent said they never gave money to the party.

A most revealing piece of evidence is the voting patterns of LPCA members in the last provincial election.

Table 10
PARTY CHOICE OF LPCA MEMBERS AND DELEGATES
IN 1982 ALBERTA PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Party Supported	Members	Delegates
Liberal	52.5	71.2
PC	26.2	3.8
NDP	16.4	15.4
Social Credit	3.3	1.9
other	1.6	7.7

LPCA delegates are more committed to the ALP cause than the general membership is. That only 52.5 percent of the LPCA membership voted for the ALP is interesting, since 66.7 percent of those members also hold ALP cards, The but not surprising, considering the 1982 vote. The fact that LPCA members have been less than committed to the ALP is further demonstrated by table 11.

Table 11
RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE EVER SUPPORTED ANOTHER PARTY
PROVINCIAALLY OR FEDERALLY

Party Given Support	Members	Delegates
no other party	52.2	66.1
PC	34.3	11.9
NDP	11.9	15.3
Social Credit	1.5	5.1
other	0	1.7

Given this evidence, it is no wonder some Liberals are concerned about party members who wish to emulate the Tories, a concern documented in the previous chapter on policy. At this time, 61.8 percent of LPCA members (and 55.4 percent of delegates) favour a split between the LPCA and ALP. Among both delegates and general members, 10 percent were undecided on the question.

Apart from questions with closed responses, survey recipients were offered open-ended questions. In two separate questions, delegates were asked which policy concerns the party in Ottawa and the party in Alberta should be focusing on at this time. Responses were very similar. In both Ottawa and Alberta, delegates thought the party should be concerning itself with organization, leadership and grassroots involvement. The preoccupations of the delegates were definitely in relation to the shortcomings of the party itself. Policy issues were only sporadically mentioned, with unemployment mentioned as an area of concern for both levels of the party, and diversification of the economy was expressed as an area of concern for the party in Alberta.

In an effort to determine the policy priorities of LPCA members, this group was presented with a list of policy areas, and asked to rank them in order of importance.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Recipients of the member survey were asked to rank the policy areas according to the priority they thought the party should be giving them at this time (September 1985; see appendix 2) No distinction was made for members between the ALP or LPCA, nor was there a distinction made between policy areas falling within provincial or federal jurisdiction. Respondents did not question this. Averages and modal frequencies were examined to determine overall

Members ranked unemployment far above the other thirteen areas. It was followed by concerns for social equality, with housing a close third. After these, eight other policy areas were ranked very close to each other. In their order of importance they were: the cost of living, international relations, pollution, agriculture, the deficit, taxes, education and Canadian unity. These were followed by concerns about crime and inflation. The least important policy area, in the estimation of responding members, was constitutional reform. Members were also able to add policy areas not listed that were of concern to them. The response was low. Listed once each by the seventy-two respondents were labour reform, the nuclear threat, medical research, reforestation and conservation, abortion, women's issues, government efficiency and free trade.

It would appear that areas of current government preoccupation, such as deficit reduction and the pursuit of free trade, are not foremost in the minds of Alberta Liberals. Rather than have their priorities determined by the media or the government in power, members stick to the items that affect them closest to home--unemployment, housing and the cost of living. At the same time, there is a healthy expression of concern for dealing with social inequalities, in keeping with traditional Liberal philosophy. It should be noted that these were responses from the general membership, not delegates or party

 208 (cont'd) priorities allotted the policy areas by the respondents.

activists. They do, however, correspond with the concerns of the party delegates, as reflected in the party's 1985 convention resolutions, which have been discussed in more detail in the policy chapter.

Recipients of both surveys were invited to list, in an open format, what they liked or disliked about the party. Responses from members or delegates did not vary noticeably. Among the things respondents liked about the party, there was a constant reference to the middle-of-the-road identity of the Liberal Party. Neither the ALP or the LPCA was specified as being the Liberal Party in question, but it can be assumed that most respondents would be thinking of the LPCA, since it was that organization's membership lists used, and LPCA delegates attended the February convention. Respondents repeatedly spoke approvingly of social justice, reform-mindedness, of the need for continued universality of social programs (an issue at the time) and pragmatism in the party. Respondents disliked what they perceived as recent movements to the right. Among other recurring disappointments with the party were its internal disputes, with members pointedly referring to James Lightbody's attempted ousting of Nick Taylor. Lack of organization at the local level was also on the minds of many. It would appear from these open-ended responses that Liberals recognize the need to build a strong grassroots party from the ground up, seeing this as a key to renewed political success and survival.

In sum, Liberals differ very little from the general population in their demographic profile, apart from the overrepresentation of Catholics, which is partly brought on by the support obtained from French Canadians. Generally, little has changed since Long and Quo conducted their 1971 study.²⁰⁹ They found that Liberal support was more likely to generate from urban dwellers, professionals and retired workers, and from low educated and university educated people, with less support from high school and technical college graduates. This present study also shows a definite interest in the party among young urban professionals, a trend the ALP appears to be capitalizing on, given its strategy of focusing on a few key urban ridings and fielding candidates who are of the young, urban professional type. Since Liberal Party resources will be scarce in the next provincial election, it is necessary that the party focus on areas where it stands the most chance of making gains. This will mean focusing on key urban ridings in the North of the province. An attempt to garner rural support is desirable, but cannot steal time and effort needed to make gains in the northern urban ridings. Population groups from which the party must improve its support in the urban areas are non-professionals, the non-university educated, and the young.

²⁰⁹ see J. Anthony Long and F.Q. Quo, *op.cit.*

IX. Leadership

Of all of the variables that exist to influence a voter's decision on election day, one of the most important is the image of the prospective candidates. Thanks to the electronic media, policy statements and election promises have been allotted a secondary role to the candidate's image. Having judged the political mood, workers mould their candidate's image to reflect the voter's desires better than the opposition can. The emphasis placed on leader image makes the topic of leadership an important one for Alberta's Liberals. Although dealt with here as a second last chapter, leadership and the debate it encourages among Alberta Liberals can by no means be relegated to the sidelines.

The resurgence in positive activity within the ALP has not been accompanied by a rush of visible support for party leader Nick Taylor. Liberals in the province have never been Taylor fans in an overwhelming sense. He is the man who split the ALP from the large federally-controlled organization in 1976. He publicly denounced the policies of the Liberal federal government and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Considering that two-thirds of the LPCA members hold memberships in the ALP, trying to please all of the people even some of the time has proven to be an impossible task for Taylor.

Taylor has even referred to himself as a failed

politician.²¹⁰ Few if any Canadian politicians bearing the status of a provincial party leader have a record as dismal as Taylor's. He was elected as a Calgary School Board trustee in 1960, a landmark that began and ended his successful political career. In 1964 he was defeated in his bid for an aldermanic seat on Calgary's city council. Hoping to ride the Trudeaumania wave of 1968 to Ottawa, he was washed out as the Liberal candidate for the federal riding of Calgary Centre by 307 votes. His loss margin was increased ten-fold in the same riding in 1972. Turning to the provincial arena, four attempts at access to the Alberta Legislature have resulted in four losses.

After ten years at the control panel and four misfires, one would think that the leader would find it most expedient for all concerned if he stepped aside. The departure of many of his contemporaries of the 1970s and 1980s might serve as another hint to Taylor that the time is ripe to do so. Instead, he sees the departure of Lougheed and Trudeau as factors that will positively influence his chances of success.²¹¹ Given the recent progress made by the ALP in its financial situation and its gathering of attractive candidates into the fold, the absence of Trudeau and Lougheed may have assisted the leader were it not for one

²¹⁰ Taylor's admittance of his political inabilities has been quoted numerous times, but came to light during the early 1985 leadership dispute in reporter Robert Sheppard's article, "Caretaker leader finds wolves at heels," Globe and Mail, Saturday, March 2, 1985. p.8.

²¹¹ This belief of Taylor's is reflected in the article written by Robert Sheppard, op.cit.

other factor. It is doubtful that Taylor can present himself to the electorate as a potential premier, the man to articulate the province's future. It is not because he is a Liberal. It is because he is Nick Taylor, a four-time provincial political loser who does not command the continued respect of much of his party.

While it may have been brewing less conspicuously beforehand, discontent with Taylor manifested itself in February 1985 at the party's policy convention. At that meeting, University of Alberta Professor James Lightbody called for "leadership renewal, with an emphasis on youth."²¹² Lightbody spoke on behalf of a number of Edmonton based Liberals, most affiliated with the federal wing of the party. Specifically, Lightbody called for a Leadership review. The February meeting provided the opening round of a contest that would come to a head at the ALP annual convention in April. The overwhelming mood of the convention and its results give positive proof that a rift exists on the question of leadership. The issue was hotly debated amid an atmosphere that became dirtied by personal accusations aimed at both Taylor and Lightbody. Original hopes for an immediate leadership review were watered down to a resolution calling for an automatic review two years after every provincial election. The result was not enough for Lightbody, who sees the resolution as ludicrous, a waste of time in that it necessitates review, even when it may not be

²¹² "The Liberals close in on Nick Taylor," Alberta Report, February 4, 1985. p.6.

desired by party members should they be enjoying political success.²¹³ Taylor supporters outnumbered the opponents two to one, the final vote on the resolution to hold immediate review being 194 to ninety-three.

But the same convention that defeated Lightbody's coup managed to plant the seeds of Taylor's demise by more than a token show of discontent. A party executive was elected that, while not outrightly identifying themselves as Taylor opponents, do symbolize the movement within the party, one that seems to be forging ahead in spite of, rather than with its leader. Most notable was the election of Steve Lindop to the office of ALP President. Immediately before ascending to the party presidency, Lindop let it be known publicly that under his command, the party executive would have complete control of the party organization.²¹⁴ His election is symbolic in two respects. First, it marks the takeover of the party by a young, professionally-oriented group, of which Lindop is but one. Second, it seriously challenges Taylor's style of leading the party which, according to critics, has been both autocratic and secretive. As former Edmonton Glengarry Liberal candidate David Stewart emphasizes, Taylor has discouraged input from other party members to an extent that he has stifled any chance of gain

²¹³ These and following sentiments were expressed during an interview with Dr. James Lightbody, Vice-President, Edmonton Whitemud Provincial Liberal Constituency Association and organizer for Edmonton Mayor Laurence Decore's successful campaign. September 30, 1985 in Edmonton.

²¹⁴ Lindop's statement was reported by Rick Pedersen in "Leadership will be an issue, Liberals say," Edmonton Journal. Sunday, March 10, 1985.

for the ALP.²¹⁵ A confrontation between Stewart and Taylor resulted in Stewart leaving the ALP. He has since left the LPCA to join the Conservatives. Whatever other disputes they may have with him aside, many of Alberta's Liberals echo Stewart's concerns about Taylor's leadership--that it has been a closed style in circumstances that demanded the opposite.

As to deciding who is right in this confusing issue, many factors appear to cancel each other out. Taylor defeated the resolution, yet the same convention elected a President who will wrestle control of the party away from the leader. Lightbody condemns the resolution that was adopted, yet the new leadership review process conforms more closely to the practice of the national level of the Liberal Party and other political parties. The biggest irony of all is what the two camps perceive to be the root of their respective arguments. Taylor says his time has come, that he can make gains now that Pierre Trudeau and Peter Lougheed have left. Lightbody and others say Taylor's time has expired, that he represents an era and style that can no longer serve the ALP.

Lightbody served as the spokesman of a distinct group, mainly Edmontonians who were also attached to the mayoralty campaign of Laurence DeCore, and who have been more visible

²¹⁵ This and subsequent comments were made during an interview with David Stewart, former President and candidate, Edmonton North Federal Liberal Constituency Association, and former candidate, Edmonton Glengarry Provincial Liberal Constituency Association. September 4, 1984, in Edmonton.

as federal Liberals.²¹⁶ There are many others who have doubts about Taylor's usefulness to the party, although they do not identify themselves with Lightbody's wolf pack.

ALP President Steve Lindop knows that the party has to have credible leadership.²¹⁷ He is careful not to endorse the anti-Taylor forces publicly, seeing his role as party President one in which he must work to conciliate with all elements of the party. Yet his own actions indicate the direction he wishes to take the party under his governance. The August 1985 edition of The Alberta Liberal appeared to place the position of leader second to that of President.²¹⁸ Although he chooses to speak on behalf of the party and no particular faction within it, Lindop does not condemn the Lightbody faction for their public attempt at dethroning Taylor. Nor does he mind that it was done so visibly, something rare among Liberal Party ranks elsewhere in Canada. Rather, he says that "keeping it quiet as per the usual Liberal tradition is fine when you have a leader that knows when to leave, but that is not the case here, and thus [the Lightbody faction] has to move to another untraditional mode." Though not a handy endorsement of the dethronement movement, implicit in Lindop's statement is tacit support for

²¹⁶ Apart from Lightbody, another vocal critic of Taylor is Al Iafolla, the Liberal candidate in Edmonton East whose comments made during an interview have been cited in previous chapters.

²¹⁷ interview with Steve Lindop, previously cited.

²¹⁸ In a somewhat subliminal fashion, pictures of Taylor and articles by him were reduced in size and stature to those of Lindop. See The Alberta Liberal newspaper of the ALP, August 1985.

their efforts. Recognition of the need for credible leadership, something the party has apparently lacked in his estimation, summarizes Lindop's sentiments on the leadership question.

Throughout the upper ranks of the party, the sentiment appears to be the same. There is no strong endorsement of Taylor, nor is there any vociferous public denunciation of him. But, among the young urban professionals who have declared themselves as candidates for the party in the next provincial election, there is a definite idea of what the leader should be. Grant Mitchell notes that the leader must be someone who is not threatened by competent people around him, a non-too heavily disguised poke at Taylor's autocratic style.²¹⁹ Former party President and leader Robert Russell is equally sublime in his approach to Taylor's leadership.²²⁰ He will not be heard denouncing Taylor publicly. Russell's lengthy tenure with the party has exposed him to a number of leaders, not to mention his own time spent in the job. When asked who he would choose among the leaders he has known as being more outstanding than others, he mentions David Hunter, leader from 1962 to 1963. To Russell, Hunter both looked and acted like a Premier. No similar credit is given to Taylor.

While the bloodletting at the February and April conventions may have caused some concern among the party faithful, there is no indication that it has incurred any

²¹⁹ from an interview with Grant Mitchell, previously cited.

²²⁰ from an interview with Robert Russell, previously cited.

long-lasting negative effects. The party executive has continued to proceed with its rebuilding scheme. The optimism of party workers and candidates continues to grow. ALP Treasurer René Paquin sees no ill effects for the party as a result of the attempt to dethrone Taylor, but only for the kingpins of the dethronement movement. In his words, "a lot of what [Lightbody] said was right--a three time loser should be gone-but they did no harm to the party, only to themselves, since they didn't unload Taylor".²²¹

Previous to the April gathering, Lightbody was confident his coup would succeed. While he may have correctly assessed the desire for change among party members, he grossly underestimated the political prowess of the eleven-year leader. Lightbody's Edmonton-based wolf pack may have been able to bring the issue into the open, but Taylor's Calgary-based supporters smelled the trap and reacted appropriately. It was obvious that the numerous Young Liberals brought in from Calgary were militantly loyal to the leader. They were carefully manipulated by Tim Hamilton, Taylor's nephew. Having detected an ambush, the wary prey avoided the trap and countered by engineering a rally of support for himself.

Given the changing times and the desire of many party members to be rid of him, one has to wonder what it is that makes Taylor want to remain at the helm. In a recently published biographical sketch of Taylor, authors Paul

²²¹ interview with René Paquin, previously cited.

Grescoe and David Cruise liken Taylor's political activity to his business practices.²²² A self-made millionaire, Taylor has made his fortune in the oil patch. But rather than invest in safe ventures close to home, a practice that would make more money for Taylor, he continues to go for the longshots-the higher risk ventures that might someday bring in "the big one."²²³ In analyzing the rationale behind Taylor's continued involvement, "politics for Nick Taylor is just one more longshot waiting to come in."²²⁴

Others explain Taylor's motives differently. In Lightbody's estimation, Taylor uses the Liberal Party like a toy. It has become a hobby for him, one that he can invest as much time and energy into as he so pleases at any given moment.²²⁵ Taylor critic Al Iafolla is more vehement in his assessment. He says Taylor maintains his role because of the fringe benefits it brings him when on business trips in foreign countries. Because of unfamiliarity with the nature of Canadian politics in other parts of the globe, many foreign states treat Taylor like a statesman when he is abroad, according to Iafolla.

Whatever Taylor's motives for remaining, one must consider the question--if he leaves, who is a better and willing prospect? The most commonly mentioned successor is Edmonton Mayor Laurence Decore. But Decore will not submit

²²² see Paul Grescoe and David Cruise, The Money Rustlers: Self-Made Millionaires of the New West. (Markham, Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1985.)

²²³ ibid., p.50.

²²⁴ ibid., p.55.

²²⁵ Alberta Report, op.cit.

to enticement from others, at least not yet.²²⁶ He has publicly stated his desire to be a two term mayor. Other Decore insiders maintain that his interests lie in federal politics, the arena he will compete in following his second mayoralty term.

Even if he was interested, Decore may have difficulty getting widespread support from Alberta Liberals. According to ALP Secretary Jean Hodgkinson, Decore sowed the seeds of his own destruction at the 1984 Liberal Leadership Convention.²²⁷ There, when he had committed his delegates to Mark MacGuigan, he crossed the floor to John Turner before the results of the first ballot were in.

Hodgkinson sees Bettie Hewes as a better candidate for the leader's position. Hewes's recent nomination as the provincial candidate in Edmonton Goldbar was a well-orchestrated event of the ALP. Liberal candidate selection meetings are notorious for drawing crowds of twenty-five people or less. Hewes attracted 500 who were treated to a night that was reminiscent of the political hoop-la attached to a leadership convention, only on a smaller scale. Although the vast majority of the people in attendance were from outside the Goldbar constituency, it was the first visible sign of the campaign the ALP has been

²²⁶ Edmonton lawyer and former Liberal candidate Mike MacDonald tried to convince Decore within the last year that the moment was ripe, and that he should make his move into the provincial arena. Decore expressed his desire to seek a second mayoralty term. This was communicated during the interview with Mike MacDonald, previously cited.

²²⁷ from an interview with Jean Hodgkinson, op.cit.

waging in the last few months. Hewes publicly claims she has no party leadership aspirations. Should the position become vacant, Hewes would be a worthy candidate, judging from her experience. She is a former City of Edmonton alderman and Chairman of Canadian National, a job she lost with the coming to power of the Mulroney government. At an Edmonton address to members of the Laurier Club, September 6, 1985, Hewes stressed women's issues and provincial-municipal relations as her prime areas of concern. These were echoed a month later at her nomination meeting on October 3. Her focus on these issues should do her well in the Goldbar contest. Should she wish to fill the vacancy Nick Taylor would leave if he retires, her horizons would have to be considerably widened. She admits she has little knowledge of agricultural concerns.²²⁸ Other factors that may work against her are less easy to remedy. Jean Hodgkinson sees no problem in Albertans electing a woman to the Premier's office. Provincial residents with less liberal views than Hodgkinson might be less inclined to agree. Given that the Liberals will not form a government as the result of a 1986 election, Hewes would be a senior citizen by the time the next opportunity rolls around. For the moment, she serves to give credibility to other candidates who might otherwise be ignored, but who now stand to be recognized for what they

²²⁸ This was admitted when Hewes was questioned by a Laurier Club member about agriculture. She expressed her desire not to delve into an area in which she did not feel competent. Nick Taylor, who was present at the meeting, made a brief reply to the question.

are--mature, professionally oriented Albertans who have positive ideas about their province's future.

Listing other possible leaders may be difficult, but to not do so skirts one important fact about Alberta politics. Albertans choose populist leaders. Neither Decore nor Hewes are established firmly in the eyes of the provincial electorate as populist. Ken Munro draws attention to one prominent Albertan who does foot the bill--Calgary Mayor Ralph Klein.²²⁹ Edmonton may have hosted the Commonwealth games and the Universiade, but Calgary will host the Olympics. Klein is liked by the voters both for the business he has brought to Calgary and for his sometimes brash assessments of things eastern.

Whether or not a suitable successor looms on the horizon, Taylor will continue to feel pressure from within the party to leave. Apart from the discontent he evokes from the up-and-coming party notables, he has always been at odds with the federal party establishment, being an outspoken critic of Trudeau during most of the former Prime Minister's sixteen years in office. Taylor was deeply alienated from the Coutts-Davey group.²³⁰ The situation is no better now with the changes being made in John Turner's Liberal Party. Taylor sees the recent dethroning attempt as part of a move by Liberal MP and former federal cabinet minister Lloyd Axworthy "to put his people in key positions."²³¹ Given the

²²⁹ from an interview with Ken Munro, previously cited.

²³⁰ Christina McCall-Newman, op.cit., pp.377-378.

²³¹ Robert Sheppard, op.cit.,

federal stature of his most outspoken critics, Taylor's accusations may not be unreasonable. The interconnectedness of the Lightbody-Turner-Decore group should make ALP members consider seriously all of the ramifications of a merger with the LPCA. Allowing Lightbody's plans to unfold could result in a provincial party willing to subvert its interests to the federal party's desires. It is a fate that is not desirable, given the nature of both Alberta and federal politics. While Liberals might question Taylor's desire to stay, they might also consider the motives of any pretenders to the throne.²³²

For now, the ALP remains outwardly complacent about its leader. Both the leadership issue and Taylor appear to be on the back burners. The party is forging ahead with its goals, despite the leader, an indication that Lindop has made good on his promise to place control of the party in the hands of the executive. Lightbody and his pack have written off much chance of success for the ALP while Taylor stays, saying that Liberals will now fail to grasp the moment that has been presented to them. But shelving the issue may be the best way to ensure energy is directed at the immediate task of rebuilding, rather than potentially splitting the party on a leadership challenge when a provincial election is

²³² Apart from the problems it may pose for the ALP, the LightbodyTurner-Decore camp is at loggerheads with many LPCA members. Many delegates from Alberta backed candidates other than John Turner at the 1984 Liberal Leadership Convention, notably Jean Chretien. The rift that developed in 1984 has been perpetuated by the "Turner" group, in their bid to wrestle control of constituency organizations away from others. For the most part, these efforts have failed.

looming on the horizon. There is some speculation among the Liberal ranks that Taylor may resign before the upcoming election, but at a time that he determines. If the election is not called until well into 1986, then Alberta Liberals can still pursue the leadership issue methodically early in the new year, leaving the successor to Nick Taylor a comfortable margin of time to prepare for the inevitable contest at the polls.

X. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the history of the Liberal Party in Alberta in an attempt to understand the reasons for its unique rejection by the province, a rejection from which it never recovered either at the provincial or federal level. Albertans have rejected the Liberal Party so adamantly at both levels for reasons which originate at the very core of the province's psyche. Alberta's rejection of old line parties that perpetuated the metropolis-hinterland relationship is a response that is based on the very social fabric of the province. It is a characteristic of Alberta that parties competing for power cannot hope to alter. If the Liberals were rejected after 1921 and have not recovered their losses, it is because of inadequacies in the party itself. Liberals have nobody to blame but themselves for their dismal record.

In particular, the party has failed to adapt to the realities of Alberta's political circumstances in the following ways, chronicled in detail in chapters 2 to 4 of this thesis. Historically, the party has been characterized by:

1. disorganization--There has never been a proper attempt to build a political machine that could compete competently in either provincial or federal elections. Attempts to build such an apparatus at the grassroots level have been met by opposition from the party in

Ottawa because of the threat it posed to existing balances the national party had struck, and the great dependence of the national party on the principle of ministerialism until 1957, and domination by the centre since then.

2. internal dispute--Liberals in Alberta have fought against each other from the days prior to the acquisition of provincial status. Liberals interested in promoting the federal party in Ottawa and those who have concentrated on building a party capable of province building (usually a minority) have always been at loggerheads with each other. The losers in this confrontation have been those oriented towards building a strong party in the province, one that could compete for power credibly, and work to build a strong province once in power. Again, this conflict has been perpetuated because of the predominance of the federal factor in the Liberal Party, and the presence of the party in government for much of the twentieth century.

Maintaining power in Ottawa has always been done without consideration for Alberta and, in many cases, at the expense of Liberals in the province.

3. a lack of credible leadership--Too often, provincial Liberal leaders have been manipulated by those in Ottawa who fear the resurgence of a viable Alberta Liberal Party, one that might have the gall to speak independently of its national counterpart. When the

leaders have been prone to taking independent stands, the opposition they have experienced from the federal machine is overwhelming. Their careers as leader are often too short lived to accomplish anything of substance. Apart from this, the debate that an outspoken provincial leader sparks between the federal and provincial factions within the province only serves to make it even clearer that a strong provincial Liberal Party will not be an easy thing to construct.

4. a lack of identity--When the moment has arisen in Alberta for a new political movement or party to make substantial gains, it has never been the Liberals that made the gains. The party has never been able to articulate the future of the province at any given moment when there was an opportunity to change Alberta's course. This failure is due in large part to a culmination of the three points listed above. If a party lacks organization, leadership and is characterized by infighting, it is apparent that it is incapable of directing the future of a province which has always demanded that its governments be able to provide credible options for the future, based on the opportunities or problems of the present.

The performance of the Liberal party in Alberta at both federal and provincial levels does not rate even polite applause. If one looks at some indicators evident in the LPCA 1985, the future holds very little in store for that

wing of the party. Factions continue to exist in the federal wing which will not be easily overcome. It remains to be seen whether federal leader John Turner will be able to survive the review of his leadership performance in 1986 and, if he does, whether he will be able to present himself as the candidate best suited to speak on behalf of Alberta's twenty-one federal constituencies represented in the House of Commons. The LPCA leads a "hand to mouth existence", in the words of its own Treasurer, and the prospects of receiving large-scale financial donations with which to fight the next federal election in the province are slim. If one looked only at these indicators, it would appear that the future of Liberalism in Alberta is destined to continue on the same stormy course it has for more than sixty years. Yet to base one's analysis on these indicators alone would be to ignore some very important signs that are being emitted, signs that suggest there is more than just a glimmer of hope for the party yet.

Another scenario entirely is projected when one looks at the movement currently underway in the ALP. That organization is under the control of a youthful President, one who appears to have studied the lessons of the past, and is working diligently to ensure they are not repeated at this time in Alberta's history. With a provincial election expected well within a year, there is a current of optimism running through the ranks of the party, one that appears to be growing. The ALP has taken on more of an appearance of a

party of young, upwardly-mobile professionals. Ironically, it is an approach federal organizer Keith Davey hoped to implement almost thirty years ago in Alberta. There was one flaw in the Davey formula, the formula he had tested successfully in Toronto. The party he hoped to rejuvenate in Alberta would have been one that was subservient to the national party. The ALP of 1985 is no such entity. Rather, it is very much oriented to competing for power in Alberta, with no consideration given to the spinoffs its victories may have for the national party. As this thesis has gone into some detail to point out, there are approaches that the ALP must take if its current efforts are to materialize in a viable, healthy party that will survive whether in power or not:

1. Organization must take place at the grassroots level. The party must make efforts to ensure that active constituency organizations are created that are headed by energetic people who can keep interest maintained among members between elections. It is an approach the LPCA would do well to copy.
2. Should there be discussions of a merger between the ALP and the LPCA, the possibility should not be considered unless the end result is a strong provincially-based organization that is allowed to steer a course independent of the national party. Given the realities of Alberta, there is no other option available in the question of merging the two entities. History has shown

only too clearly that the presence of only one Liberal Party in the province that is primarily an organ of the national party results in no gains for provincial Liberals interested in improving their situation in Alberta.

3. Like organization, finances must be based at the grassroots level, and large percentages of those funds raised locally must remain in the hands of the local constituency officers. The party must move to take full advantage of the generous legislation which makes contributions to political parties by independent donors an attractive option for all concerned. This will demand creativity, but the results can only be positive. The result will be a more democratic party, with more control of finances at the constituency level. It will also result in a more rational scheme for financing candidates in elections, in that constituency associations will be more responsible for their own campaign funds, but will also have the means to raise them.
4. The party must work to widen its basis of support. As the chapter on membership demonstrates, there is a need to attract more non-professionals, more non-university educated members, more youth and more rural residents, notably farmers. Agricultural concerns have again reared their head in a province which can never forget that agriculture is the one renewable resource which has

always been a large part of the economic life of Alberta. Like Social Credit under Manning, the party that stands to make gains in the 1980s will be the one that manages to retain urban support while convincing farmers that their needs will be looked at too.

5. The question of leadership cannot be forgotten, but it might be best shelved momentarily. Rather than re-open the wounds that were created during the early 1985 attempt at leadership review, the party would do well to wait until after the next provincial election before discussing the matter again. At that time, any losses incurred in the provincial election can be blamed on Taylor. In the meantime, there is much work to be done in the areas mentioned above. Work can progress, as it appears to be doing, in spite of the leader. Candidates in the next provincial election may be able to draw support from other strong candidates, rather than from the leader. When the time to select a new leader does occur, the party must give careful consideration to the work that has been done, to the priorities the new executive has attempted to forge ahead with. It would be irresponsible for the party to choose a leader who would merely play into the hands of the national party, or who would be too weak to avoid being identified with that organization, should the national process of reform not make it more receptive to the needs of the West and, particularly, Alberta.

Political behaviour has been so consistent in Alberta that one can almost predict it given hypothetical situations. Despite differences in the nature of the parties that have dominated Alberta, all since 1921 catered to the same alienation from Eastern Canada that remains apparent in the province in the 1980s. Thelma Oliver, who examines the nature of Western alienation, defines it as a dissatisfaction with the output from the national system, but not with the system itself.²³³ Only recently has a radical alternative such as separation been pursued to any extent, and such alternatives are yet to be widely accepted, as long as a provincial government exists that can adamantly defend the province's rights and protect its future. Historically, western alienation has been expressed in partisan dislike for the national government. Unfortunately for the provincial Liberals, the connection between the federal government, the national Liberal Party and its provincial counterpart, have been all too obvious.

This study, with its resultant conclusions, has been conducted in the year following the election of a federal government with a legitimate claim to being national in character, and one which is the same political stripe as the province's government. It is the first time since before the election of 1911 that such a partisan similarity has existed in Alberta. It will be most interesting to see the results of the interaction between the two levels for purposes of

²³³ Thelma I. Oliver, "Aspects of Alienation in Alberta," (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1974), p.132.

testing observations made here. Mulroney's approach to resources, free trade and other topics dear to the hearts of the province will be watched carefully. The provincial and federal governments would do well to study the lessons of history. Federal-provincial conflict could see a re-creation of the events experienced in the province before 1917, when the federal Liberal Party failed to fulfill the hopes of the province which elected its provincial counterpart.

Alienation in Alberta is deeply rooted. It is consistently expressed at the polls. The failure of the two levels of government to resolve the causes of alienation will result in behaviour that should come as a surprise to no one attuned to the historical precedents. This failure, when combined with the possible inability of the provincial Tories to articulate the future of the province, makes for a culmination of circumstances that other political parties should recognize for what it is--a rare moment of opportunity that will not present itself again for some time. If the Liberal Party can make the most of the situation, then Roger Gibbins' speculative analysis may allow an insight into the future:

...if a reservoir of alienation exists which seeks electoral outlet and expression, the formation of a Conservative government in Ottawa may well promote the resurgence of the Liberal party in Alberta.²³⁴

Such speculation even a year ago would have been the stuff from which the best of back-slapping jokes are made. In the aftermath of September 4, 1984, given the historical and

²³⁴ Gibbins, op.cit., p.156.

current realities of the province, it serves a more sobering role of reminding those who would seek political power not to ignore the lessons of their past.

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Appendix I

CONVENTION SURVEY

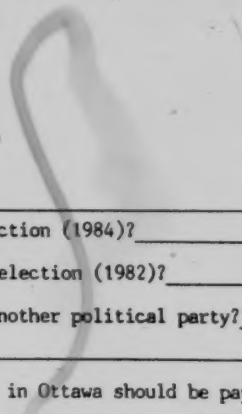
The following survey is part of a study being conducted in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire and deposit it in the box marked "Convention Surveys" in the lobby, beside the registration desk. Results will be forwarded to the party, thus your effort may be of assistance in future planning and organizing. Please remain anonymous. Your cooperation is most appreciated.

1. AGE: ☐ under 25 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65 and over
2. SEX: ☐ Male, ☐ Female
3. What was the last grade of school that you completed? _____
4. What is your occupation? _____
5. Do you belong to any professional associations? Please specify. _____
6. Do you belong to a labour union? ☐ yes ☐ no
7. Do you belong to an agricultural cooperative? ☐ yes ☐ no
8. Do you belong to any lodges, service clubs, or community organizations?
Please specify. _____
9. What is your annual family income? ☐ less than \$20,000 ☐ \$20,000-\$30,000
☐ \$30,000-\$40,000 ☐ \$40,000-\$50,000 ☐ \$50,000-\$60,000 ☐ over \$60,000
10. In what country were you born? _____
11. If born in Canada, what province were you born in? _____
12. How long have you lived in Alberta? _____
13. Does your family live in Alberta? ☐ yes ☐ no If yes, for how long? _____
14. Were you born on ☐ a farm, ☐ in a small town, ☐ in a city of less than 100,000 people, ☐ in a large city?
15. Do you now live on ☐ a farm, ☐ in a small town, ☐ in a city of less than 100,000 people, ☐ in a large city?
16. What is your religion? Please specify denomination. _____
17. Do you pay rent or own your own home? _____
18. What constituency to you belong to? _____
19. Do you fill an office in the party organization (i.e. constituency president, director etc.)? Please specify. _____
20. How long have you been a member of the party? _____

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21. How did you happen to join the party? _____ heard from a friend, _____ convinced by a candidate, _____ convinced by a canvasser, _____ party literature, _____ other please specify _____
22. What political party(s) does (did) your father vote for?
Federally _____ Provincially _____
23. What political party(s) does (did) your mother vote for?
Federally _____ Provincially _____
24. Do you engage in activity for the party between elections? _____ talk to friends about policy, _____ often go to meetings, _____ sometimes go to meetings, _____ never go to meetings, other _____
25. Do you give money, buy tickets, or make similar financial contributions to the party? give money sometimes _____, often _____, never _____, buy tickets _____, other _____

26. Is there anything in particular you like or dislike about the party?

Things I Like	Things I Dislike
	

27. What party did you vote for in the last federal election (1984)? _____
28. What party did you vote for in the last provincial election (1982)? _____
29. Have you ever given your support or membership to another political party? _____
Please specify when and which party. _____
30. As a Liberal, which concerns do you think the party in Ottawa should be paying most attention to at this time? _____

31. As a Liberal, which concerns do you think the party in Alberta should be paying most attention to at this time? _____

32. Do you favour having a separate Alberta Liberal Party (provincial wing) and Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta (federal wing) in 1985? _____
Why or why not? _____

Appendix II

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

This survey is being conducted as part of an extensive study of Liberalism in Alberta. Please take a few moments to complete and mail to: Political Science Department, University of Alberta, T6G 2H4. Your effort will be of assistance to the party in future planning and organizing. Please remain anonymous. Your cooperation is most appreciated.

1. AGE: ☐ under 25 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65 and over
2. SEX: ☐ male ☐ female
3. What was the last grade of school that you completed? _____
4. What is your occupation? _____
5. Do you belong to any professional associations? Please specify. _____
6. Do you belong to a labour union? ☐ yes ☐ no
7. Do you belong to an agricultural cooperative? ☐ yes ☐ no
8. Do you belong to any lodges, service clubs or community organizations? Please specify. _____
9. What is your annual family income? ☐ less than \$20,000 ☐ \$20,000-\$30,000
☐ \$30,000-\$40,000 ☐ \$40,000-\$50,000 ☐ \$50,000-\$60,000 ☐ over \$60,000
10. In what country were you born? _____
11. If born in Canada, what province were you born in? _____
12. How long have you lived in Alberta? _____
13. Does your family live in Alberta? ☐ yes ☐ no If yes, for how long? _____
14. Were you born on ☐ a farm, ☐ in a small town, ☐ in a city of less than 100,000 people, ☐ in a large city?
15. Do you now live on ☐ a farm, ☐ in a small town, ☐ in a city of less than 100,000 people, ☐ in a large city?
16. What is your religion? Please specify denomination. _____
17. Do you pay rent or own your own home? _____
18. Do you belong to an urban or a rural constituency? _____
19. Do you fill an office in the constituency organization (i.e. president, director etc.) Please specify. _____
20. Are you a member of the Alberta Liberal Party (provincial party)? ☐ yes ☐ no
If yes, how long? _____. Are you a member of the Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta (federal wing)? ☐ yes ☐ no If yes, how long? _____
21. What nationality or ethnic group best defines your ancestry? _____

Appendix III

Interviews

Cavanagh, Barry. President, Edmonton Strathcona Federal Liberal Constituency Association. 3 September 1985.

Day, John. President, Edmonton Glenora Provincial Liberal Constituency Association (1969-71, 1973), Candidate, Edmonton Belmont Provincial Liberal Constituency Association (1975), Vice-President, Edmonton Area Region, Alberta Liberal Party (1974-76). 11 September 1985.

Ewasechko, Henry. Treasurer, Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta, Treasurer, Edmonton South Federal Liberal Constituency Association. 4 September 1985.

Hodgkinson, Jean. Secretary, Alberta Liberal Party. 6 September 1985.

Iafolla, Alfonso. Candidate, Edmonton East Federal Liberal Constituency Association. 5 October 1985.

Kratz, Martin. Policy Chairperson, Alberta Liberal Party. 18 September 1985.

Lightbody, James. Vice-President, Edmonton Whitemud Provincial Liberal Constituency Association, and campaign organizer for Edmonton Mayor Laurence Decore. 1 October 1985.

Lindop, Steve. President, Alberta Liberal Party, and Candidate, Sherwood Park Provincial Liberal Constituency Association. 5 September 1985.

MacDonald, Michael. Candidate, Edmonton West Federal Liberal Constituency Association. 5 September 1985.

Mitchell, Grant. Candidate, Edmonton Meadowlark Provincial Liberal Constituency Association. 17 September 1985.

Munro, Ken. President and Candidate, Edmonton South Federal

Liberal Constituency Association. 4 September 1985.

Paquin, René. Treasurer, Alberta Liberal Party. 5 September 1985.

Power, Nancy. Past President, Edmonton East Federal Liberal Constituency Association. 12 September 1985.

Ragan, Gertie. President, Alberta Women's Liberal Association (1957-59), Vice-President, National Women's Liberal Association (1959-61). 11 September 1985.

Russell, Robert. Past President, Former Leader and Candidate, Alberta Liberal Party, and Past Candidate for the Liberal Party of Canada in federal elections. 11 September 1985.

Stewart, David. Past President and Candidate, Edmonton North Federal Liberal Constituency Association, and Past president and Candidate, Edmonton Glengarry Provincial Liberal Constituency Association. 4 September 1985.

Straith, Jay. Co-Chairperson, Liberal Party of Canada in Alberta Convention, February 1985. Telephone interview, 30 January 1985.